PRESENTER 1: Hi, everyone. We're going to get started in a second. Kim, are we good to start?

KIM: Yes, we are.

PRESENTER 1: Great. Hi, everyone. Good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you're sitting right now. I'd like to welcome you to today's webinar, which is a part of our series of webinars that is focused on different topics related to the HOPWA program, and specifically HOPWA modernization. Let's see.

Kim, it's not letting me-- oh, there it is, OK. So, today's agenda we're going to start with just some introductions and logistics, and just do an overview of the webinar series and HOPWA modernization. Then we'll little dive right into the first theme for today, which is community need.

We'll then spend some time talking about financial projections, and what factors go into the development of those projections. And then the next topic will be program design. And, lastly, we'll talk about some program administration and operations.

Just as part of the introduction, the HOPWA monetization series is funded and developed by HUD'S Office of HIV Housing. And there have been three TA providers, organizations working to present these. Today, it's myself, Marie Herb, and Liz Stewart, who are from the Technical Assistance Collaborative. And we're really happy to be here with you today.

In our audience, we have grantees who are going to be, or have been, impacted by HOPWA monetization. And, particularly, today's focus is on those grantees who are seeing an increase in their formula, and in many cases a significant increase in their formula. We did invite all the HOPWA monetization grantees to participate if they wanted to. But the focus is really on those that are targeted to see an increase.

Those grantees may have, in turn, invited their project sponsors to join us today. And so we welcome you. And then besides the TA providers, we have some staff from HUD'S Office of HIV housing, and perhaps some staff from the HUD field offices with us today. So we have a good group.

Just quickly the logistics-- today's webinar is live. But we are recording it. And the recording of this webinar and all of the webinars in the HOPWA monetization series will be put on the HUD exchange. And we think that'll be actually pretty in the next week or two. So be on the lookout for that, if you have some colleagues who weren't able to join today.

Because we have so many people who are participating, we're not going to be taking live questions. But we encourage you all to submit your questions in the question box. And that should be on the right hand side of your screen. And if you want to just take a minute to look for that, I encourage you to do so because we would love to hear from you.

Because we can't hear from you live, and really hear from everyone who is on today's webinar, we're going to just do a few polls so that we can get a sense of who our audience is. So Kim is going to help me by launching the first call, which is just a simple, can you tell us, do you work for a grantee organization, a sponsor organization, are you a HUD staff person, or do you fall into some other category? And I'll give you a minute to do that.

Kim, just let me know when you think we're ready to show some results.

KIM: The results here. Hold on just a minute. We have 69% are grantees, 14% HUD staff, and 17% are other.

MARIE HERB: OK, great, so no one who has kind of identified as a sponsor yet. But I see people are continuing to join. So, hopefully, we'll have some of those sponsors.

I'm going to launch another poll, which, again, is just to really try to get a sense of your level of HOPWA expertise. So you have three options in this poll-- I am a HOPWA expert, I have some HOPWA knowledge and am kind of comfortable working with the program. Or I'm really new to HOPWA. I might be new to this program, my agency.

But I'm, in general, a HOPWA novice. And, again, Kim open the polls. So we'll just give you a few minutes. And Kim will let me know when she thinks we're ready.

KIM: OK, our results are 21% I'm a HOPWA expert, 61% I have some HOPWA knowledge, 18% I'm a HOPWA novice.

MARIE HERB: Well, that's a great mix. So thank you everyone for doing that. And so for those of you, those 20% who are HOPWA experts, if you have any thoughts or things you want to contribute, again, we can't open this up. But you could add that into the question box, even if it's not a question, if you have some guidance or tips that you want to share with folks.

For the rest, again, ask questions. Slow us down. Liz and I often talk fast. So just say, hey, slow down. And we'll do so.

With that, I just want to remind you there is one more webinar in the HOPWA webinar series. And that is scheduled for July 18th at 1:00 o'clock. And that's going to be looking at HOPWA data, and kind of how to use that data to do some planning in your community. So, again, you'll get that registration info in the coming weeks, I think. But if you want to mark your calendar now, it's July 18.

So just to kind of set the stage again, particularly if any of you are new and haven't been on our previous webinars, when the legislation passed enacting HOPWA modernization, HOPWA identified three goals or values that is designed to really drive decision making throughout the process. And these values are that, one, no person should become homeless as a result of HOPWA modernization, that all funds should be used to meet the needs of eligible households, and that no funds should be recaptured from these grants. So, really, particularly with the target audience today, which is grantees who are seeing an increase, really looking at ways to use all those resources that you're being given.

And then, lastly, that grantees should ensure their project designs to meet the changing needs of the modern HIV epidemic. And that includes with a goal of ensuring positive health outcomes, and reduced viral loads for HOPWA-assisted households. That's particularly important if you have HOPWA programs that have been around for a long time. Getting additional funds might be an opportunity to think about modernizing those actual programs, and not just modernization in the formula.

We specifically have some learning objectives. And the first is to make sure that grantees have the tools you need to make the important decisions regarding the HOPWA funds that your community has been given. We want to make sure you can identify the factors and the tools that you need to make funding and cost projections with these resources, to explore program design strategies. And we're going to be spending time on that today.

Maybe after this, you'll kind of consider introducing some new program designs into your community. And then to reviewing program administrative topics, and just making sure that you all kind of have everything in place in order to really introduce new program designs. So now, we'll jump into the actual meat of the webinar.

So there's several ways that HOPWA funds could be used to provide a housing subsidy assistance. One broad area is rental assistance. That's tenant-based rental assistance, master leasing, scattered sites, facility based, and we're going to go over those, project based rental assistance, or facility based housing.

Others are short term housing assistance. That includes short term supported housing, emergency motels, hotel units or vouchers, and short term rent mortgage and utility assistance. That second grouping, the short term housing assistance, we are not going to be focused on that today. We're going to be focused on that top portion, which is the rental assistance. So just kind of making sure that you're there.

All of these rental assistance activities can typically be designed to be permanent housing or transitional housing. Typically, those TBRA, the tenant based, is usually designed as a long term permanent housing program model. And we're going to talk about those in a bit.

We're going to stop for one minute and do one more poll. And this is just, now that we've introduced what we're going to be focused on today, to get a sense of if you're operating any of these. So if you could let us know, grantees, if you find or and or operate TBRA programs, if you fund or operate master lease or project based rental assistance, if you do both of those type of activities, or if you do neither of those, and are not currently doing TBRA, master leasing, or project based.

Kim has launched the polls. So we're going to just wait a minute or two. Kim, and I'll let you tell me when you're ready.

KIM: The majority of our people, 67%, are doing TBRA programs. We have no one doing master lease or PBRA. 33% are doing both. And we have no one that said they're doing neither.

MARIE HERB: OK, great, thank you. OK, so I think that has set the stage. And I think we're ready to really dive into the content. I'm going to turn this over to my colleague, Liz Stewart, to talk about community need.

LIZ STEWART: Thanks, Mary. So this next section, as Marie said, it's going to be about community need. And we're really going to focus on why it's important to be considering the community needs when you're thinking about growing your rental assistance program, or starting a new one.

So your programs really should be based off your needs. And that may sound simple enough. But how do you actually know what those needs are? There's a variety of ways that you can determine that.

Perhaps, as part of this modernization process, you've already been part of a local planning process with Ryan White or the CoC. And that can help you understand what your needs. And that's great and valuable as you continue to participate, as you advocate for and be a provider of services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

But if you haven't yet started that, then now is really a good time to be thinking about it. You want to be reaching out to your local agencies and providers, and really start building relationships. And because as a provider, you are part of the knowledge base for understanding the needs of the people in your community, it's really important to listen to your tenants, to your clients, to those people that maybe you haven't been able to engage with, to really understand what the needs are.

Again, this can be done through a variety of ways. In some communities, they found it helpful to have listening sessions or focus groups to really understand what those needs are, and solicit that feedback. Along with trying to understand getting information directly from folks and partners, and the people that you're serving, another thing that you would want to be looking at is more not just qualitative data, but really looking at quantitative data when you're thinking about community need.

And there are a range of housing factors that you'd want to consider when you're thinking about communities that may impact what your determination is around that there. And these factors should be part of your decision making about which type of assistance is best suited for your community. And so this slide here kind of outlines what some of those factors are that you should consider.

So the first bullet is really looking at housing cost burden and affordability gap. And this is really trying to understand, what percentage of household income is going towards rent? Is it 30% of someone's income? Is it 50%? Is it even higher than that?

And so when you're looking at rents and income, that can really give you a sense of how big the gap is between what people can actually afford and what they have to pay for housing that is not subsidized. That is one data set that you could look at. Another area that you could look at is basically the availability and accessibility of existing affordable units.

So looking at your affordable housing inventory, what does that look like? And not just specific to units that are dedicated to people living with HIV or AIDS, but what does it look like overall in the community? What affordable opportunities are actually out there?

What is the turnover rate for those units? What is the status of waitlists for public housing, and having a voucher program? Also thinking about looking at the CoC inventory-- are any of those units currently targeted to people living with HIV or AIDS?

And then a last suggestion there around the affordable housing factors is talking with your Housing Finance Agency, and whether or not any of the low income housing tax credit unit within that portfolio have any kind of special supportive housing set aside, because if they don't then that could be an opportunity for some local advocacy.

And it's really important that you have all of that information to understand that community need. And then the last area to look at is geography. So what does your service area look like?

What areas are right now being served well? But what areas are not? Are there any gaps in how services are spread out geographically? Are there transportation issues within your community?

And did that impact how people are able to get services, or access housing? And how does that influence any of the choices that you may make about having rental assistance, and where it might go? And here are some additional questions that you may want to start thinking about.

The very first question, of course, is does your community need rental assistance? And what kind of data do you have available to support whatever the conclusion is? And with that data, do you have a good sense of what type of rental assistance is best, if there is a need there?

And we're going to be talking a little bit more about the types of rental assistance later on when we get into the program design. But that is one of the key questions that you may want to think about. If you already have rental assistance, or you're already providing rental assistance, the one other thing you can do is take a look at its performance to learn about the need and its effectiveness.

For example, if you are currently operating a TBRA program, then the waitlist will tell you a lot about the demand for that type of assistance. And you can also look at how and when households transition off your TBRA program. That can be very informative i understanding how well your current program is doing in meeting individual household needs, and really what the demand is and turnover is there.

The next question, and we've touched on this a little bit already, is the idea of thinking about the larger affordable housing community, and who is and who is not being served within your current system. And then the last question there is really about trends, and what is changing in your community. So I think for any of you on this call that have a long history of working in the field, and serving people living with HIV or AIDS, you've seen a tremendous change in the epidemic over decades. And today, along with medical advances and HIV care, we are also seeing the damage of the opioid crisis. And so these type of trends you want to be looking at, because they really could have a big impact on your current and future needs, and what you actually need in your community.

So I just rattled off a bunch of different questions that you may want to consider when you're looking at community need. And the reality, is it really does take a concerted effort and time to do all the legwork, and spending time connecting with local agencies, collecting data, and then putting it all together to really understand what your community is.

And it's really important for all of you to know that there is a resource available to help this effort of community need. And that is the HOPWA resource ID activity. So this is an eligible HOPWA activity that may be worth considering as part of your planning process. So you can use this activity to pay for the time spent doing research and planning on your community needs. Or if you hire someone specifically to do that, to do, for example, a housing and service needs assessment, that is an eligible activity.

So for those of you that are getting an increase, and a large increase, this could really be a valuable tool in your tool box to used to really try to understand what the community need is, and what types of other activities you may want to spend those additional dollars on. And if this is something you're thinking about and want to learn more, there is a resource available, a recording from the HOPWA Institute presentation on assessing community need and using resource ideas. So take a look at the link when you get the slides.

OK, so now we're going to move into thinking really about the numbers, and discussing financial projections. So whenever you're planning to expand, you really need to think about what you can afford budget-wise. And in particular with rental assistance, you need to think about the program's sustainability, because it is a long term commitment of money that year, over year, after year, that you would be having go out the door.

And so a helpful step in determining this is to take a look at really developing financial projections. So what do we mean by developing financial projections? What we mean by that is really conducting a budgeting exercise, where you identify actual dollar value for the money you expect to come in. And that's your funding. And then the money you back to spend, and that's going to be your cost.

And as you're developing these calculations, you're trying to identify costs specifically for the rental assistance program that you're considering. So if, for example, you have an existing program, then you will have on hand already a range of data that can help you think about what those projections will actually be. So you'll have that historical data.

If you're starting a brand new program, you're going to have to look further develop a budget of all the necessary costs. So you may want to rely on other programs that are similar, or that you operate, or reach out maybe to a charity to try to understand some of those amounts. Just keep in mind throughout this whole financial protection process that projections are estimates.

And estimates are based on past experience and future best guesses. So they're not going to be perfect. But they really can be very helpful for the planning process. So, again, the goal of developing financial projects projection is to help you determine how many households you can support in your housing subsidy program going forward.

So now, we're going to outline what some of the steps are to figure out the numbers for potential new programs, or expanding existing programs. So the first step is really going to be identifying all of the potential sources of funds. So the first is going to be your HOPWA funding, which we know is determined through the annual federal budget process.

And I think you all know this process can be unpredictable, both in terms of the amount of funds you'll receive in any given allocation year, and in terms of when that amount will actually be determined. And as a way to help grantees plan, HUD'S Office of HIV Housing has developed a set of projections, which I think many of you have received. And while these are not definitive amounts, they do give you a picture of what your funding levels could look like as the HOPWA modernization changes go into effect.

Another resource may be your own unspent of funds from prior year allocation. If you have any unspent funds, you should definitely include these funds in your projections. And keep in mind that there are time limitations associated with these funds. And you want to make sure that you're spending them before they're at risk of recapture, because large sums of unspent funds can be put to very good use in a variety of ways, not just for expanding a rental assistance program.

But you could consider for example using acquisition or rehab for a site with those unspent dollars, and then having rental assistance down the road go into that. Last bullet there, is just by targeting overall budgeting and financial projections, you should also be thinking about any non-HOPWA funding that is available from federal, state, and local sources that could be part of your rental assistance program.

So once you have all those numbers, those sources that you have available, then you're going to have to think about what your actual program costs are going to be. So looking at cost data from recent years can be very helpful in determining what the actual cost is going out the door, and how that changes from year to year. So there's annual cost increases that you'd want to be taking into account.

One thing to keep in mind for example is that costs that haven't increased in recent years, those costs might be ones where you want to plan for future cost increase. And the slide here just has a list of cost specific to administering a HOPWA subsidy assistance program that you'll want to think about, as you're figuring out what your budget actually is. So the first one on there is considering the FMRs and the rent comps you have available, really looking at the historical data to see how much these have changed in recent years.

What does that look like, from year to year? What does the housing market look like? So if you're housing market is just continuing to get tighter, less vacancies available, then that is a good predictor of future cost increases.

You also want to be thinking about not just the rent amount subsidy that's going out the door, but what the actual staff and program costs are going to be, and whether those rates will be increasing year to year. So does this the staff generally get sort of cost of living adjustments on their salary? That's something that you'll want to be thinking about as you project out any other kind of program costs that might be associated with that.

Another area to consider is what the actual attrition patterns are of the current households that you may be serving. And what we mean here is how many households transition off your housing subsidy assistance program in any given year. How much of the budget do those households actually represent?

So if you are building your TBRA program, you will definitely want to consider your attrition rate as you begin to add new households to your program, because as you're adding new households, there's also going to be folks coming off. So that may mean that you actually want to add additional households, depending on what the overall budget looks like. Another area to consider is just the trends in the income levels and the family sizes of those that you're serving.

So changes in either of these can either increase or decrease your cost. So you want to be looking at patterns to indicate how you should take this into consideration. Additionally, you want to be thinking about future lease renewals.

This may be most applicable to master lease situations, like when are those future lease renewals expected? Would any of these renewals provide an opportunity to increase your program? And then, lastly, is making sure that you're considering any operating capital costs, if applicable. So are there any upcoming capital needs that may carry some significant costs? You really want to be completing a comprehensive survey of properties to help ensure that you're accounting for these different costs.

This is another resource you want to make sure that you're aware of. One of the past webinars in the series focused entirely on how to manage your budget in the context of modernization, and it explained the use of the budget impact tool that was created. And this resource and tool will be available in the near future on the exchange. So definitely look out for that, because you can actually use that tool to enter in some of the data you have to project those costs forward. And now, I think we're going to go ahead and talk a little bit more about program design.

MARIE HERB: Liz, there is one question that came in. I think when you were talking in the community needs section, you introduced the idea of a resource ID. And a question was, if we haven't already been approved for resource ID, what do we have to be able to do that moving forward?

LIZ STEWART: Oh, great, yeah, that's a really good question. So one of the things I think overall with HOPWA modernization, if you're thinking about adding any kind of new activity that you haven't done before, you want to make sure that that's look back at your comp plan and your action plan, and ensure that activity is in there. If it's not, you're going to have to work to amend those plans to add that activity. So definitely reach out to your local field office about that, so that if you're determining, yes, we really could use resource ID to help us understand our community needs, you would want to add that in there before you actually start doing that activity.

MARIE HERB: Great, thanks. So I'm going to start talking about program design and some of the important things for you to think about in shaping potential new programs, or reshaping some existing programs. When you're thinking about how to design a new program, you want to make sure that you're putting in some thoughtful planning, and that you're taking this opportunity for growing your program to put it to good use.

Here are four fundamentals that should be driving your design. And there on this slide in front of you. To really help address the needs in your community, so Liz just went over that.

To make sure what you design is going to be sustainable, moving forward. Much of that is going to be-- again, Liz reviewed kind of how to do all those financial projections and budget projections. You don't want to start a new program and then not be able to keep it going either six months later, or a year later, or four years later, whatever the case might be.

But what else? There's also the mission. And we have a different audience here. So the grantee may have a mission. The sponsors may have a different mission.

But also, the community as a whole would have some overall mission as it relates to housing needs of people living with HIV and AIDS. So what are those core goals, of either your organization or the community? Just like HOPWA goals for HOPWA modernization, what are the goals in your community?

I'm assuming it is to either make sure nobody living with HIV becomes homeless. Or if people are homeless, to get them out of homeless and homelessness as quickly as possible, and keeping those episodes of homelessness brief, if needed. So this is a key question that should drive any targeting that your program might try to achieve.

Again, you did your needs assessment. Did you find that you had a large number of people living with HIV who were experiencing homelessness? Or perhaps you have a large number of people living with HIV who are leaving jail or prison, and don't have a place to go. So is there a particular way you want to target the programs that you're designing?

This can also influence decisions that you make on how you run your program, from intake, to taking into program participants, through the participation of someone into the program. And then even if helping people move on to different housing opportunities, or in very rare circumstances if you have to terminate someone's participation in the program. Will your program follow housing first or harm reduction concepts? Is that something that your full community has fully embraced?

And really trying to follow the philosophy, or the demonstrated experience, that if you get people into housing first, and then you could deal with kind of their service needs and other barriers that they may have in order to help them sustain that housing. As you're thinking about your program's design, you should be asking yourself if there are aspects of a certain type of assistance that would work well in a community or would not work well with your mission. And whatever your mission is, the new program should be in line with it.

And then, lastly, for all of us, again, making sure that program design is going to help improve health outcomes. That's a core value of the HOPWA program, and a key goal for supporting people living with HIV and AIDS. The bottom line in program design is figuring out how much of what?

So how many PBRA units do we need? How many facility based units do we need? And this can be a hard question.

There are different types of HOPWA eligible activities. That's the what. So you have to make choices about what type you want to pursue.

And figuring out the how much is also a challenge. Using what you've learned by looking at your community's needs, and using the financial projections as a tool, can help you with this. Taking both of those, the needs and the projections, you can start thinking about the advantages and disadvantages that each different type of rental assistance may have.

And to get you started on thinking this through, we're going to spend a few minutes here talking about these different types of rental assistance. So the first we are going to talk about is, again, tenant based rental assistance, or TBRA.

So TBRA, many of us would know it by kind of thinking of housing authority Section 8 program, or what's now called the Housing Choice Voucher Program. In TBRA, there's a rental subsidy that is provided to an eligible household. And then that household can then use that rental subsidy to go choose a unit where they want to live.

TBRA programs provide a lot of autonomy and independence to households, as they are the ones who are choosing the units. Of course, there are certain constraints on the size of the unit and the housing condition of the unit. But regardless of those constraints, the individual or the family have a lot of independence in selecting the housing that they'll reside in.

TBRA and also helps to integrate households in the community, because people with a TBRA isn't-- they're not living in a facility that is 100% for people living with HIV or AIDS. They're not living in special housing. They're just living in housing in the community that anyone else could live in. They just have this rental subsidy to help pay for it.

And from a programming perspective, it gives a great deal of flexibility to both grantees and project sponsors. A TBRA a program, for example, can be built up slowly, literally one unit at a time. So if you haven't done TBRA, and you think it might work, you don't have to start with 100 units.

You could start with 10, or 20, or ease into it so that you, your sponsors, and the community can get used to it. At turnover, grantees and project sponsors can also choose to not reissue a voucher. So whether it's because of budget issues, and you feel like you have to scale back on your program, or maybe you just feel the program is not working, when you have that voucher turnover you cannot give it to a new household.

And that's a nice way to kind of ease out of the program, if you want. So there's lots of advantages with TBRA, for both clients and for the sponsoring agencies. There are disadvantages, though.

TBRA, by design, is a scattered site model. Again, that means that people kind of scatter around the community. They go find their own units. This can create challenges in connecting households to services. Especially in your smaller communities or more rural communities, where there's less density, and there might be greater distance away from services.

You know, as you work to make services available to households in a TBRA program, and in communities where there maybe is such an expansive geography, you might need to deal with issues of availability, of transportation. And is there the expertise or the specialized services that a program participant may benefit from? That might not be available in every community.

TBRA can also be a challenge in housing markets that have very high rents, and or very low vacancies, so those really tough housing markets. Liz and I are here in Boston. It's a very tight housing market.

While TBRA is successful here, it takes a lot of creativity and hard work by those agencies that are running the program. Some of that creativity is going to be helping to identify landlords who are willing to participate in the program, who are willing to, perhaps, limit the rent they charge to a certain amount. So the successful programs have made an effort to really woo landlords. This might be an opportunity to combine TBRA with permanent housing placement resources, to really perhaps, provide security deposits so that people with the TBRA can actually access those units in that tight housing market.

The next type of subsidy we're going to talk about is project based rental assistance. And that works a bit differently than TBRA. With project based rental assistance, as the name says, it's attached to the project, to the unit itself. So when an eligible HOPWA participant moves in, they enjoy the benefit of having that rental subsidy.

But when they move out of the unit, they don't get to take that rental subsidy with them. That rental subsidy stays in the units for the next eligible program participants. It also means that the HOPWA provider can select the units for project based rental assistance, and then that sponsoring agency will then identify eligible households, and help them move into that unit in which there is a project based subsidy.

Advantages with project based rental assistance is that the provider has more control of the location. It means that a provider can cluster units, and have an economy of scale, as far as services and attention to those units. This cluster of units could be an entire facility or site. Or it could be a set aside of units within a larger building.

This model for assistance does provide more stability, as the unit remains available, because the subsidy is there. And at turnover, then another household can move in pretty quickly. You don't have to go through what might be a longer housing search process as you would in TBRA.

And project based rental assistance can also be used together with other funding streams. That can help leverage capital dollars, and also, again, make sure that these units are of good quality. But there are also some of the disadvantages of project based rental assistance.

So unlike TBRA, which provides a lot of autonomy, project based rental assistance limited autonomy somewhat because people aren't free to choose where they live. They might be offered a number of project based assistance units. But they can't just go out in the broader community.

And if it's a single site program, then it also means that many people-- so if all the units are for people living with HIV and AIDS, then the broader community may identify that building as the HIV housing program. And it just means that the program participants living there may not enjoy the confidentiality that they would if they were in the more scattered sites.

Project based rental assistance can also be more expensive on the programming side, with higher staffing and operational needs-- taking care of those units, making sure they're running, and perhaps providing the security in the units. So there's those additional costs that you'd want to include in your financial projections.

So especially as the epidemic has changed, you're going to want to really think about these single site, or clusters, of housing. And really think about the best ways to help maintain the confidentiality. And really think about the best ways to try to integrate those units into the larger community.

And, finally, another disadvantage is if you don't already own a building, or have good relationships with landlords who might be willing to have a project based subsidy in their properties, then there might be a longer lead time to develop a new site to access those units. And any time there's that longer lead time, that's time that households are just waiting for housing. So those are some of the kind of disadvantages or challenges you'll want to get over, if you do think that project based rental assistance might be the way to go.

We're going to talk about master leasing now. And in master leasing, the HOPWA provider, the HOPWA sponsor, whatever you're calling them in your community, they are the lease holders. So they are going out and leasing, renting units from private landlords, and then subletting those units to their clients or program participants. For providers who are working with people who have some typical barriers to housing, having no credit, or having bad credit, having a criminal history, having histories of eviction, master leasing can be a really good advantage, because the landlord is going to be leasing from the agency.

And they have a greater level of trust, or feel like there's at least a bit less risk in leasing the unit to an agency, instead of to a program participant who has demonstrated some challenges with successful housing tenancy in the past. This relationship also means that you can help minimize the risk of eviction. Depending on what population you're working with, you may have households that have never been a tenant in their own right.

So they're going to have a learning curve on how to be a good tenant. Or they may have some behavioral health issues that can lead to risk for addiction. In a master leasing situation, the sponsor or the provider can work with these households, while helping them address those needs, while also being able to kind of keep and sustain the housing itself.

But there are some risks and responsibilities to master leasing that you need to be aware of. So as the lease holder, you're taking on the legal responsibility for the unit, just as in any other kind of situation. So you're going to need to make sure that you are paying for the unit, the rent, every month.

And if you run a large master leasing program, that's going to be quite a large payment on a monthly basis for rent. And you're going to need to have a plan, or even a reserve a fund to pay the rent on time, even when you're tenants may be late paying their rent to you. So just because the tenant isn't paying you, you have to pay the landlord.

So, remember, your clients, your tenants, they're going to be paying a portion of the rent, based on their income, to you through their sublease. But if they can't pay, or they just choose not to pay, you as the lease holder still have to pay the rent in full.

I just want to reiterate that this could really be a cash flow issue for an organization. So you need to consider that when you're choosing this type of assistance, you have a plan in place that can address some of these contingencies. So what are the three types of rental assistance that we wanted to review with you, along with describing some of their advantages and disadvantages. For all of these types, we encourage you to look at the pros and cons, and weigh them against each other while you think about that community need, while you think about your budget, and while you think about your mission.

This next shared housing isn't a type of rental assistance. But we want to talk about it a bit here, because it is a way for people to use rental assistance, and can sometimes be a good housing solution in those tight housing markets. It is allowable under the HOPWA regulations.

And it could be a really effective model that works well for some households. Shared housing must always-- and I really want to stress must-- always be voluntary. You can't design a program that is going to make or force people to live together.

For any household that's entering into a shared housing situation, it has to be their own choice. One population that folks often think of as more likely to choose shared housing is young people. But, really, there's been so many successes with households of any age. And people of any age may really be interested in this model for different reasons.

Having a roommate can be a good thing. In the best of cases, it can provide some support and resources that people in that house support each other. Also, in very high cost rental markets, or again where there's such a low vacancy rate that it's really hard to find available units, it can also be a very practical way to house more than one household at a time. And the costs are lower for both the provider and for the household.

The shared housing model, the way it works is when two HOPWA eligible households voluntarily choose to live together in one housing unit, or when a HOPWA household shares a housing unit with another resident who may not also be a HOPWA household. Typically, we see this model with two single person households.

Or it could also be with three single persons, or four single persons. Or it could be a small family, or sharing with a single person. Just keep in mind, though, that all habitability and occupancy standards must be met.

So shared housing is not overcrowded housing. It's just shared housing. So the folks who are in it are going to get the number of bedrooms that they need, based on their size.

The other thing with shared housing is that each eligible HOPWA household in that shared housing would get their own separate lease. And a contract would be executed for each distinct household. In addition, the allowable rent would have to be prorated.

So, for example, when two individuals are sharing a two-bedroom, they would split the two bedroom FMR, that's fair market rent, and not use a one-bedroom FMR for each individual. So say the two bedroom fair market rent in that community is $1,000, and a one bedroom FMR is $750. In this case, the pro-rated share to each household would be $500 per unit there, which you can see is a way to save money, because instead of $750 times two, you're paying $1,000.

OK, so more questions and considerations for program design-- there's lots to think about here. And so we're going to touch on these quickly. Geography-- again, Liz talked about geography a bit during her presentation on community need. You should be thinking about your entire HOPWA coverage area, and looking at where services are, and where you are locating this housing assistance.

Obviously, this applies to site-specific assistance. But it can also apply to TBRA. During the housing search, your TBRA households need support in finding units in different areas. I know many of the grantees who we've been working with might have a geography that covers five counties. So are you able to really provide the assistance folks need over that whole geography? There may be barriers that you have to overcome to be able to do that.

Is the housing acceptable? Is there public transit? Can the program participants get to the housing? And when they're living in the housing, can they get to the community services and amenities that they need? And that's an important consideration.

The staffing levels and leveraged resources, as you design any programs, you're really going to want to think about, what are the staffing levels that you need to meet those needs? What are the resources that you have to pay for the staff? You want to make sure that you have the infrastructure.

If you're going to do TBRA, do you have the staff, or the ability to hire staff, who can help program participants identify and find units? Do you have the staff who can inspect those units, and make sure they meet habitability standards? Do you have the staff or the infrastructure to cut what might seem like a lot of checks on time on a monthly basis?

Ideally, the role of program management and property management are separate. So that means that, ideally, the person who is providing support to households, perhaps providing services, or the referral to services, is not the same person who is collecting rent. You want to structure your program so that those folks are not wearing the same hat.

And, lastly, you may need to assess the capacity of your project sponsors to take on more work, or this new program design. Do those project sponsors have the staff, the funding, to successfully carry out the new program in the best way possible? You may want to look in your community for, perhaps, some non-HIV specific providers who are already running similar housing models, and might be willing to kind of take on this new population that might be new to them, or create partnerships between them and some of the HIV providers.

Again, as a grantee, you need to make sure that you're able to make the timely payments to an increasing number of programs and or sponsors. HOPWA allows advanced payments. But if you're going to do advanced payments, it really requires very strong policies and procedures to make sure you meet the federal financial requirements in 2 CFR Part 200. Do not to advance payments without making sure you have the mechanisms in place to make sure you're doing it properly.

Liz, I think that was the end of those sections for now. Any questions? Or should we move on to program administration and operation?

LIZ STEWART: We have a few questions that came in around project based rental assistance. So the first is, can you can you explain how PBRA a can create integrated housing?

MARIE HERB: Yeah, so that's a great question. So I think a lot of times, when people think about project based rental assistance, they do think that all the units in, say, a 40 or 50-unit building all get project based assistance, and all are kind of serving the same target population. But there is many, very successful examples of project based rental assistance, where in that same 40 unit program, perhaps only five of the units have the HOPWA project based rental assistance.

And so those five HOPWA eligible households are scattered within that project based facility, and kind of just living among folks who are not getting the subsidy. And that's, I think, a really good way that people can integrate the project based, secure those units for the long term, but still give people the opportunity to enjoy anonymity, and maintain their confidentiality.

LIZ STEWART: Thanks. Another question-- how can PBRA leverage other housing resources?

MARIE HERB: Sure, so if you're in a community that might either have very old housing stock, say, that wouldn't meet habitability standards, and needs to be renovated, the property owner may kind of be a little reluctant to either take on the project based assistance, or may not be able to access other financing. But with the project based assistance, either public funds-- so many of the communities here get HOME dollars, which could be used to renovate affordable housing, may get low income housing tax credits, those development projects that you mentioned earlier Liz.

And the project based subsidy is just a really good way, because it grantees those owners, and it grantees those funders, the bankers or the public entities with the public funds, that there will be a stream of income to support the units in the long term. So project based assistance is often, you can walk into it in a negotiating situation. It's a really great way to access additional needed funds that you might need to renovate properties.

LIZ STEWART: Thanks, Marie. That's all the questions we have for that. I think we can go ahead and move on to program administration and operations. And this section is really all about the rules of running your program. And I think rules are everyone's favorite thing.

But I just want to just do a quick disclaimer on this section, that just due to time limitations that this is going to be a general overview, since we don't have enough time to get into all the details of program administration and operations, that could be a whole other webinar. But we are going to direct you to a bunch of different resources that are out there that get into much more detail. And we'll point those out in a few minutes. But we still wanted to kind of give a general sense of what the program administration operations look like when we're talking about HOPWA rental assistance programs.

So just starting with the HOPWA regs-- we're going to be going over the key regulatory requirements. So those are those bullets there, the eligibility, habitability standards, rent standards, rent reasonableness, and the resident rent payments. So for client eligibility, this is really the same for all of the HOPWA activities, including rental assistance.

The household needs to meet two criteria. They must have an income at or below 80% of the AMI. And they must include a person in the household who has been diagnosed with HIV. And that's really it. There's just those two criteria.

But we do see, locally, that grantees may add additional local criteria, such as income targeting, to reach households at a lower income bracket. So that is something that you are able to do. In addition to eligibility, there are also standards to ensure that housing units are safe, and standards related to controlling the cost of rent.

So the next second bullet, HOPWA habitability standards must be followed. And these are a little bit different than HQS. But you can also follow the housing quality standards. And if you choose to use HQS instead of the habitability standards, then you must do so for all of the units that you're assisting.

So while you do have a choice here, you have to be consistent across all the units in your program. And, additionally, you have to make sure that the units meet all state and local housing codes. And sometimes with the housing habitability standards, it may seem like another hoop to have to jump through to meet these standards. But it's just important to remember that these standards are in place to ensure that the units are safe places to live. And that really is an important goal.

Additionally, there are specific rent standards for providing rental assistance. And when we say rent standard, what we mean here is that the rent cannot exceed either the FMR for your community, or the HUD approved community wide exception rent. You can use one or the other.

And grantees are actually are able to increase the rent standard by 10% for up to 20% of units. And if you do this, you just need to be sure to track so that you don't exceed that 20% limitation. But that is definitely something to consider, especially for those market areas that we've been talking about that really are tough market conditions, where households are competing with other households that may not be necessarily low income, may not have some of the other barriers to housing.

So thinking about increasing the FMR is one way of trying to be more competitive out there, so definitely something for grantees to consider there. In addition to just the general rent standard, you also want to keep in mind rent reasonableness requirements. So the rents must always be reasonable.

And that is measured by comparing the rents to other market rate units in the community. If there are similar units in the same building, for example, the unit that will receive HOPWA rental assistance cannot have a higher rent than another unit without a subsidy. If rent comparables within the same building aren't an option, then you'll need to find other units in the near vicinity. And you have to document all of that in the file.

Rent reasonableness this has to be documented initially, annually, and then if the property owner makes a request for a rent increase. Besides the rent resource requirements, another general overall requirement for rental assistance programs with the exception of [INAUDIBLE] is the resident rent payment. And that amount of rent must be calculated based off a household income. Minimum rents are not allowed.

That's really important to mention. I know in some PHA programs, the [INAUDIBLE] voucher program, some PHAs can outline a minimum rent in their plan. That is not the case for HOPWA. So if a person is a person with zero income, for example, then 30% of their income then would be zero.

So you also want to consider that when you're thinking about the household that you may be serving, and also be thinking about specific utility costs that may need to be considered as part of that. So a unit where utilities are included might be the ideal setup for a household with no income. So just make sure that when you're calculating a household income and calculating the rent, you have to follow the HUD rules.

To help do this, there is an income calculator available online, as well as an income resident rent calculation specific for HOPWA. So you just want to make sure that you're checking out those links to help with that process, and especially if you have new staff coming online, making sure that they understand how to do that calculation.

OK, so now we're going to go ahead and spend a minute or two talking about a specific tenant base rental assistance issue that comes up with some frequency. And that is all around TBRA time limit. So it's really important to remember that TBRA is considered permanent housing.

And there is nothing in the HOPWA regulations that limits the amount of time that a household can receive HOPWA TBRA. Due to limited funding, programs can and should be helping households transition to other permanent housing, for example, such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program where that becomes available. But you want to keep in mind that there is no limit for TBRA.

And setting strict time limits in your program really can become problematic. Time limits can be, number one, difficult to enforce, and in the worst case scenario can lead to household discharge from permanent housing into less stable housing situations. And, ultimately, that is really counter to the goals of the HOPWA program. So the bottom line here, when we're talking about TBRA timeline, is make sure you're not discharging households into homelessness, or unstable housing, through the use of time limits, and remembering that, as a grantee, there's nothing in the HOPWA regulation that limits the amount of time that someone can be in tenant based rental assistance.

OK, so now we're going to talk about policies and procedures. And it really is important that you have policies and procedures in place for all of your program. This is where you're defining exactly how your program operates, making sure you have everything written down, because this really helps you be consistent and transparent in your decision making, and outlining to everyone, not just staff, but any other stakeholders, how the program actually works.

And one key thing about having written policies and procedures is that when you have staff turnover, this is a document that can be very helpful with a consistency piece of ensuring that, even with turnover, that you have the written policies in place to ensure that folks that are new really understand what the policies are. It's also really helpful to be able to tell households at the beginning of their enrollment in the program, what all the steps will be, and what they will be expected to do.

So while not exhaustive on this slide here, this is a pretty good list of all the main topics that you'd want to cover in your policies and procedures. And you can see, just from the slide, that you would want to cover basics like eligibility, any rules, client participation agreements, and termination. It also covers things that are more profit-oriented, for particular things and situations that may come up such as the housing search process, the moving in and moving out. Additionally, more serious situations that can come up, like emergencies or death of an eligible HOPWA member, it's important to have those policies in place so that people really understand what they need to do when some of those situations arise.

As I just mentioned earlier, it really helps to tell households what the process will be like to get into housing. We all know that it doesn't happen overnight. The moment somebody gets accepted to the program, they're not necessarily in a unit the next day. There really is a full process associated with that.

And so the slide here really breaks it into four parts that we think most of the processes will fall into as part of a rental assistance program. So the first being intake, second unit search, third unit review, and then, finally, the move in, which includes the lease up process. So during intake, you're going to be determining eligibility, doing assessment.

You'll need to identify who is in a household, collect all of that income verification. And then once the household successfully makes it through that process and is found eligible, that's when the housing search begins. And before they start that housing search, that's the best time to review with the household what their requirements are that the unit will need to meet, including the FMR, or whatever the standard is in place, the number of bedrooms they're eligible for, and some basics about habitability.

The household often has to submit an application for housing. And this is also an opportunity for both the household and you to review the lease, because you don't necessarily want to sign it yet. You just want to review it, and be sure there are no illegal provisions, or anything else that may be problematic.

The third step involves inspecting the unit, and ensuring that it meets HOPWA habitability or the HQF standard, and to complete the rent reasonableness determination. And you also then need to calculate the rent, which you need to ensure that includes any utility allowance that may be applicable. The final step is the lease up process.

And this is where you want to be following up to make sure that everyone has actually signed the lease, you have a copy of it for the file, and that everyone has signed the landlord agreement that's between the HOPWA provider and the landlord, and that any deposits that need to be paid are paid. With all that paperwork done, then the household can move in.

OK, before we wrap up, and as I said that was a very quick general overview, I want to make sure that you are aware of some of the guidance and resources that are out there, all of which are available on the HUD exchange. Of course, if you're thinking about increasing your rental assistance program, we definitely encourage you to use the HOPWA Rental Assistance Guidebook. This is really full of all those details that you need to know that we weren't really able to lay out fully in today's presentation.

There are two other resources that are really good that I've already mentioned, that calculating income calculator, and the rent calculation worksheet. Additionally, for those of you that were able to participate in the HOPWA Institute back in the fall of 2017, you know that that list is chock full of really great information. And those presentations were all recorded.

And those are all available on the HUD exchange. And last but not least is the HOPWA AAQ. So as you're thinking through either your program designer, or what kind of activities are eligible under the different types of funding available, we mentioned a few today beyond just rental assistance-- permanent housing placement, housing information. All of those may align overall with your rental assistance program, making sure that you understand what all the different rules are around that. You can always submit questions to the HOPWA AAQ. You also have TA providers as resources.

So just want to leave with some final thoughts. HOPWA modernization is giving some communities an unprecedented opportunity to expand their program. In order to make the most of this opportunity, spending some time to really think about and identify what is going on in your local community will help make the choices that will provide the most benefit, and really meet that community need. Another step that will be time well spent is going through and developing financial projections.

This is going to help you think about the pace of growth that your budget can manage, and the long-term commitment that running rental assistance programs demands. As we said earlier, program design is all about how much of what, answering these questions and developing a strategy that will help you build a plan for moving ahead. And being TA providers will always remind you about the basics, making sure that you're brushing up on regulations, updating your policies and procedures, defining your mission. These are good fundamentals that give a good return on programs that run more effectively.

So, again, don't forget you have a designated TA provider. They're a resource. Make sure you use them. And we look forward to continuing this conversation as you work to develop, either expand or potentially add on new programs.

MARIE HERB: Yeah, I don't see any questions. But I just wanted to also use this as an opportunity. When you were showcasing those resources on the HUD exchange, that I know HUD is also in the process of updating some of its materials regarding rent calculation. So I encourage anyone who's listening who is not already signed up for the HOPWA listserv on the HUD exchange that they do so, so that when those materials are available that you'll be notified. And you can start putting them into action as well.

I don't see any more questions. I would love to launch one final poll. It's a simple one. So just after today's discussion, do you have a better understanding of HOPWA housing subsidy models? And it's just a yes or a no. Kim, open the poll.

KIM: The poll is open. And based on our responses, we have 100% yes.

MARIE HERB: OK, well, that's great. So, again, this webinar, as with all the webinars that are part of the series, they are recorded. And they will be posted on the HUD exchange. And so look for them there if you need to do any follow up.

And you all have been in contact with a HUD TA provider who's been assigned to you. So you can always reach out to that HUD TA provider as well with any follow up questions, or to your HUD field office. Liz, anything else? Or are we set to say goodbye?

LIZ STEWART: I think we're set. Thank you, everyone.

MARIE HERB: Thanks, everyone. Have a good afternoon.