

HOPWA PROGRAM UPDATE:
Formula Allocations, Upcoming Initiatives, and Grantee Support
November 16, 2021

SLIDE 1

Elizabeth: Hello everyone. My name is Elizabeth and I will be your tech support host for today's webinar. Please note that all participant lines will be muted during this webinar and for technical support questions related to the content in this webinar, please directly message me in the chat box. This webinar will last up to 90 minutes and will include a Q&A period at the end of the program. To queue up a question or comment for us at any time, please enter your questions in the Q&A box and not in the chat box. This meeting is being recorded and will be available on HUD Exchange in the coming weeks, and the PowerPoint will be emailed to you at the conclusion of today's webinar. Thank you.

Kate Briddell: Hello, and welcome to today's webinar. We're happy you are here. Today's webinar is HOPWA Program Update: Formula Allocations, Upcoming Initiatives, and Grantee Support.

SLIDE 2

Today's speakers are Jemine Bryon, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs at HUD, Rita Harcrow, Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, and Amy Palilonis, Supervisory Housing Specialist. Also on the line and providing web support are myself, Kate Briddell, and Crystal Pope from Collaborative Solutions, and Christine Campbell and Emily Fischbein are here for assistance as well.

SLIDE 3

Kate Briddell: This webinar will include information on modernized HOPWA formulas impact on all grantees beginning in fiscal year 2022; the HUD Equal Access Rule; the HOPWA program Racial, Gender and LGBTQ+ Equity Initiative; the Reset, Renew, Recharge strategy that will help ensure program excellence and positive community impact and equity.

SLIDE 4

If you have any questions during the webinar, please feel free to add them to the Q&A box. As Elizabeth said, we would like you not to use the chat box. And now that the housekeeping is over, I would like to turn this over to Jemine Bryon. Jemine.

SLIDE 5

Jemine Bryon: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to today's webinar on HOPWA program updates. I'm Jemine Bryon, I'm HUD's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs. I have the honor of leading HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, OHH, which is responsible for implementing the HOPWA program, and the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, known as SNAPs, which is responsible for all the homeless assistance grants programs here at HUD. It has been an incredibly difficult year for all of us personally because of the pandemic, but also extremely challenging for our programs and the people we serve. So I want to first and foremost thank you all for your commitment and service always, but most especially in response to COVID-19. We recognize that the pandemic is not over and there's still important work being done to expend the CARES Act funding and to address critical housing and health related needs of HOPWA program clients related to the pandemic and the economic crisis.

Jemine Bryon: However, with important milestones ahead regarding formula modernization, HOPWA's 30th anniversary, as well as other new HUD initiatives focused on equity, we thought it was the right time to revisit and provide updated information on HOPWA formula modernization, the Equal Access Rule, as well to highlight a few new program initiatives. So today is the first non-COVID-19 focus webinar OHH has hosted in quite some time, and I know you'll find it helpful. I want to thank Rita and her team for the great work and this presentation today. I want to, again, let you all know that we at HUD appreciate all the important and hard work you have done and continue to do to provide critical housing and supportive services to low income people living with HIV and their families in your communities. Please enjoy today's presentation. It is my honor to be with you here today. Be well, everyone. Thank you. Let me turn it over to Rita Harcrow.

SLIDE 6

Rita Harcrow: Thank you so much, Jemine. Hopefully everyone can hear me. I echo what Jemine said. Welcome everyone and thank you so much for the hard work that you've been putting in since the start of the pandemic. But we do want to revisit some other topics now, and I'm going to talk a little about HOPWA formula modernization. Over the past few years, HUD has been working to implement the changes to its allocation formula for HOPWA grantees. Many grantees have participated in TA webinars, direct technical assistance and support and training on how to plan for HOPWA modernization. With the necessary distractions that we've had because of COVID-19, our focus has shifted away from that area. However, now that we've reached the final year of the phase in period for HOPWA modernization, it's time to revisit this information and ensure that we're all making plans and that plans are in place for allocation changes at the local level.

SLIDE 7

Rita Harcrow: For those of you who may not be familiar with HOPWA formula modernization, there were a few reasons why our old funding formula needed to be updated. The prior formula was in effect from when the program was created in the early '90s until the statute was modernized in 2016, and it gave funding to each eligible jurisdiction based on their cumulative AIDS cases. And that was the only data set available in the early '90s when the formula started. The cumulative AIDS data included all reported AIDS cases since the beginning of the epidemic or since the beginning of counting, and that included many people who had passed away. So the previous formula also didn't account for people living with HIV who had not yet progressed to an AIDS diagnosis. So it didn't count HIV, it only counted cumulative AIDS.

Rita Harcrow: For many years, HUD service providers, advocates, they identified that disconnect between the way the formula worked and the reality of the modern epidemic, and that we needed to have resources available to communities based on the actual number of people living with HIV in their community. Allocating funding based on cumulative AIDS cases reported since the beginning of the epidemic also resulted in disproportionately less funding for areas with more recent caseload as compared to those major urban areas from earlier in the epidemic. Using the number of people currently living with HIV that also includes people with AIDS, it better targets the HOPWA formula dollars to communities based on a more relevant data set representing current need.

SLIDE 8

Rita Harcrow: This slide highlights the key points of formula modernization. The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act or HOTMA updated the HOPWA formula statute to base eligibility for formula funding and grant amounts on people living with HIV instead of cumulative AIDS cases starting with the 2017 allocation. HOTMA also removed the previous requirement that 25% of formula funds be distributed to metropolitan areas based on above average per capita AIDS cases. So that pot 25 or bonus funding under the prior formula was only available for metropolitan areas. States could not receive any part of that pot 25 or that 25% bonus. HOTMA updated the HOPWA formula to remove the bonus funding for metro areas but replaced it with the requirement that 25% of formula funds would be distributed based on local housing costs and local poverty rates. So under this new formula, all grantees receive funds under the 25% pot, not just cities or metropolitan areas.

Rita Harcrow: The law also provided that the modernized formula would be phased in over a five-year period. And that was to avoid highly volatile shifts in either direction for any one jurisdiction. HOTMA included provisions that said during the five-year phase in period, jurisdictions would not gain more than 10% or lose more than 5% of their share of the total available

formula funds from the previous year. Those caps were included in the law to give communities time to plan and adjust for their coming new allocation amounts and we originally projected that several areas would receive substantial decreases as well as substantial increases to funding. But what happened during the phase in period was that Congress has been providing enough funding for the HOPWA program to keep all grantees relatively whole since 2017. So over the course of the phase in of the new formula, most grantees have seen increases or remain relatively level.

SLIDE 9

Rita Harcrow: When Congress modernized the formula in 2016, OHH developed some core values and that was intended to help us guide decisions that would be made at every level regarding modernization. And we're nearing the end of the phase in period, the stop loss period, and the point of fully implementing the HOPWA formula. It's also time to revisit these values as we make considerations for the first year of full implementation. First, no person should become homeless as the result of HOPWA modernization. All funds should be used to meet the needs of eligible households with no funds recaptured from grants. And grantees should ensure their project designs meet the changing needs of the modern HIV epidemic with the goal of positive health outcomes for HOPWA assisted households and reduced viral loads.

SLIDE 10

Rita Harcrow: Those goals were developed when we were projecting major shifts in funding, but again, we didn't see those shifts over the last five years due to the appropriation sizes. Here you'll see an infographic that shows the previous HOPWA formula. This is how HOPWA math was applied to determine local allocations previously from 1992-2016. You'll see here in the gray area that 90% of the total appropriation is eligible for formula grants. So all formula grantees share in that 90%. And then there was a split from that so that 75% of that 90% was based on cumulative AIDS cases from CDC data and the other 25% is that bonus or pot 25 that I mentioned earlier that was based on higher-than-average AIDS incidents also from CDC data.

Rita Harcrow: Again, that prior formula was based on cumulative AIDS cases. And according to the CDC, in 2016, about 55% of people counted in the cumulative AIDS calculation were deceased. So the old formula had to account for deceased cases because of the outdated terminology that was being used, and that's a large part of what was updated. And again, that also resulted in disproportionate funding for areas that had more recent caseload increases. So we were seeing less equitable funding for rural southern areas.

SLIDE 11

Rita Harcrow: And now this graphic shows the updated formula from 2017 forward. And again, you'll see the gray area that's 90% of the HOPWA funds out of the total appropriation that goes into formula grants. So that 90% is shared among formula grants. But now the formula splits out in a different way. So 75% of the 90% is allocated based on living HIV cases from CDC data, 12.5% is allocated based on poverty rates from US Census data, and the other 12.5% is allocated based on fair market rents as determined annually by HUD. And all formula areas are eligible for that pot 25 or those two 12.5% combined and not just metropolitan areas. And after this math takes place during '17 to '21, the stop loss measure was applied. However, FY 21 is the final year of the stop loss period. So in 2022 or the coming year, those allocations will be based solely on the formula that you see here.

SLIDE 12

Rita Harcrow: So, as I mentioned already, every year since 2016, Congress has increased HOPWA appropriations. Here you see the actual appropriations year-over-year. The increases have been based on the level of funding required to ensure that no HOPWA grantee would lose funding in a given year due to modernization. And for the most part, all grantees have gained funding with only a handful of grantees remaining level to the prior year allocation or seeing very slight decreases. And although the formula is being updated, I want to remind you that appropriation level has the most significant impact on local allocation levels. Next slide.

SLIDE 13

Rita Harcrow: As we think about the big picture of HOPWA modernization, it's important for grantees to consider projection scenarios for planning purposes locally. Here you see some hypothetical HOPWA FY 22 scenarios. So just looking across that top line at the \$430 million level that was appropriated in 2021, grantee A received about \$7.9 million. But in 2022, at the \$450 million level appropriation level, they're projected to receive \$8.4 million. And at the \$600 million projection level, they would receive \$11.1 million in 2022. So again, you can see here that the appropriation level makes a significant difference in local allocations. It's not just based on formula changes.

Rita Harcrow: The FY 22 projection scenarios have been shared recently with many grantees who may be on this call that were part of the highly impacted TA cohort. So we've been working with a number of grantees that were expected to have significant impacts from modernization and they've received these FY 22 projections, and it's being shared in the form of a projection sheet. Those projection sheets with projected allocation levels will be sent out to all HOPWA grantees in the coming weeks. So

everyone will have them soon, but I want to go over a couple of things that you'll see in those sheets that will help you in your local planning efforts.

SLIDE 14

Rita Harcrow: On the projection sheet, HOPWA grantees will find a chart like this that shows the actual allocation each year since the formula was updated in 2017. The chart also shares a projected allocation estimate for FY 22 based on the president's budget request for HOPWA at \$450 million. So '17 through '21 are actuals, and then '22 is what we're projecting based on \$450 million. So in this version, grantee A can see the upward trend of their allocation since 2017 followed by another increased projection in the coming year.

SLIDE 15

The projection sheets also have year by year information in a chart format. So here you can see the HOPWA appropriation each year, as well as grantee A's actual allocation each year, and the projected allocation for 2022 based on the president's budget.

SLIDE 16

Rita Harcrow: So again, if grantees have not yet received their 2022 projection sheets, you will be receiving those soon. I encourage grantees to take time to review those sheets carefully and plan for the coming changes along with your project sponsors and people with lived experience in your communities. This is the time to come together and plan for those projections, for those formula allocation changes. We know that many grantees will experience increases and that will allow communities to address local needs in ways that were not possible under the old formula or even during the phase in period. If you get your sheets and have questions or concerns about your FY 22 projections, you have questions or if you would like to get technical assistance in working through any of your planning, please reach out to us through the HUD AAQ and TA portals.

SLIDE 17

Rita Harcrow: And finally, one area I wanted to mention related to HOPWA modernization is update to the HOPWA regulations. Some of you were part of listening sessions a few years ago regarding a regulation update for HOPWA, and that is still a work in progress. HUD is undertaking rule-making to ensure that HOPWA regulations comply with the HOTMA law that updated the HOPWA formula. A notice will be published before regulations are in effect, and you'll have an opportunity for public review and comment on those proposed rules, again, before they are effected.

So please be on the lookout for that in the coming months. And now I would like to turn the presentation over to Amy Palilonis, Deputy Director.

SLIDE 18

Amy Palilonis: Thanks Rita and good afternoon everyone. I am going to take a few minutes to discuss the Equal Access Rule as well as tell you about a new HOPWA initiative focused on equity.

SLIDE 19

Just for a little bit of background information on HUD's Equal Access Rules, in 2012, HUD published a rule titled Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity. That rule required that program eligibility determinations for HUD programs be made in accordance with the eligibility requirements of each program, and that housing be made available without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Building on that rule, in 2016, HUD issued a final rule titled Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs.

Amy Palilonis: This gender identity rule ensures that all individuals have equal access to many of the department's core shelter programs in accordance with their gender identity. Providers that operate single sex projects using funds awarded through the Office of Community Planning and Development, including the HOPWA program, are required by the rule to provide all individuals, including transgender individuals and other individuals who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, with access to programs, benefits, services, and accommodations in accordance with their gender identity without being subject to intrusive questioning or being asked to provide documentation of their gender. This rule has been in effect since 2016 although during the last few years, there were some proposed changes by the previous administration to scale back the gender identity rule. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 20

Amy Palilonis: But this year, the White House under the Biden administration has prioritized fighting LGBTQ discrimination and issued an executive order focused on preventing and combating discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 21

In April of this year, HUD Secretary Fudge announced that the proposed changes to weaken the Equal Access Rule were withdrawn and that HUD

would commit to the original rule that ensures HUD programs and services are delivered with equal access regardless of gender identity.

SLIDE 22

Amy Palilonis: For HOPWA grantees and project sponsors, there is an expectation that your programs are compliant with the Equal Access Rule. This includes that HUD recipients, sub-recipients or providers must establish, amend, or maintain program admissions, occupancy, and operating policies and procedures so that equal access is provided to individuals based on their gender identity. And this requirement includes tenant selection and admission preferences.

Amy Palilonis: What does the Equal Access Rule mean for HOPWA grantees and project sponsors? Basically it means that it's not acceptable to require a person experiencing homelessness to deny their gender identity in order to have a place to sleep. Housing and services should be provided in accordance with client's stated gender identity without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Families may not be excluded from HUD housing programs because one or more members of the family may be LGBTQ or perceived to be LGBTQ. Services should be provided without clients being subjected to intrusive questioning or being asked to provide documentation of their gender. And facilities are prohibited from segregating or isolating transgender individuals solely based on their gender identity.

Amy Palilonis: If you've not done so already, you should review and revise program policies and procedures to ensure equal access to your HOPWA programs, make sure that anti-discrimination and inclusive policies are adopted and implemented at the agency level and HOPWA program level. The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing actually published a HOPWA In-Focus message back in May of this year and the link to that In-Focus message is on this slide. This message highlights the Equal Access Rule and talks about what it means for HOPWA. I definitely encourage you to read that message and utilize the linked technical assistance resources and other information that is covered in that In-Focus message. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 23

Amy Palilonis: I'm now going to talk about an exciting new initiative focused on racial, gender and LGBTQ+ equity in the HOPWA program. Next slide.

SLIDE 24

In January of this year, President Biden signed an executive order titled Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. This executive order focuses on advancing equity across the federal government to create opportunities

for the improvement of communities that have been historically underserved.

Amy Palilonis: The executive order states that affirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity is the responsibility of the whole of our government. The administration recognizes that advancing equity requires a systematic approach to embedding fairness in decision making processes and is calling on executive departments and agencies to recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity for people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 25

Amy Palilonis: The executive order included a definition of equity that is shown on this slide. As we are starting to look at what equity means for HUD and for the HOPWA program specifically, we are in the beginning stages of developing a technical assistance initiative focused on encouraging grantees to begin looking at equity within their organizations and looking at HOPWA program data and determining what can be done to make the program more equitable. This equity work begins with looking at what our data can tell us, recognition and awareness that everyone has biases, and recognizing that people with lived experience need to be at the table to inform this work. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 26

Amy Palilonis: Under this new TA initiative, which we are calling the HOPWA Program Racial, Gender, and LGBTQ+ Equity Initiative, HOPWA TA providers will work with communities to assess their HOPWA program's ability to address equity and provide tools for communities to improve their systems so that people living with HIV have equitable access to housing and services. The desired outcome of this initiative is to have HOPWA programs provide services using an equity lens, ensuring that Black, Indigenous and people of color, Women and LGBTQ+ communities have unfettered access to HOPWA housing and services. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 27

Amy Palilonis: There are several goals of this new initiative and they include working with communities to agree upon the need for centering equity, especially race equity, as a core value of the program; partnering with people with lived experience and utilizing current local data to establish a baseline and identify system disparities regarding how HOPWA programs currently address equity; developing tools and resources for communities to improve their systems to increase equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous and people of color, Women and LGBTQ+ communities. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 28

Amy Palilonis: The goals also include working collaboratively with communities on how to address equity as part of their program designs, identifying synergies between HOPWA and other HUD and federal partner programs around these equity efforts, and working with communities to determine strategies for local allocation of HOPWA resources to ensure movement in the direction of improved equity. Next slide, please.

SLIDE 29

Amy Palilonis: As I said, the initiative is still in its early planning stages. Yesterday afternoon, an email went out to grantees from the hopwa@hud.gov email address announcing this initiative and soliciting grantee volunteers for a cohort to help develop and pilot this Equity Initiative. And so we are looking for a cohort of volunteers. That volunteer participation will include identifying people with lived experience to be equal partners in the planning process, being part of the initiative planning committee -right now we are estimating that there could initially be up to 10 hours per month in order to participate in this planning committee- and participating as a pilot community once the planning committee has defined the scope of the initiative. The time commitments for the pilot component will be defined as part of the overall initiative planning process.

Amy Palilonis: The email that was sent out yesterday afternoon contained a link to a grantee information form for any grantees interested in volunteering for this opportunity. We sent the email out using contact information from APR/CAPERs and other not always reliable or up-to-date sources. So if you are a grantee and did not receive the email about the Equity Initiative, please reach out to Christine Campbell at Collaborative Solutions. Her email address is on this slide. She will be able to give you the information you need to determine whether or not you would like to volunteer for this opportunity.

Amy Palilonis: And I mentioned that the information form, that's sort of the mechanism we'll be using to collect sort of volunteer information, and that is a Google doc, I believe. So if you have any trouble at all accessing the document, just email Christine at the email address provided on this slide and she'll be able to work with you to still be able to capture that you're interested in participating in the planning for this initiative.

Amy Palilonis: We encourage all grantees with an interest in equity to volunteer to help us develop and pilot this exciting and important initiative. And again, any questions at all or if you didn't receive the email, just reach out to the email address on this slide. That is it for me. I am now going to turn things over to Kate at Collaborative Solutions to tell you about another exciting new HOPWA program initiative that's in development.

SLIDE 30

Kate Briddell: Thanks, Amy. Yes, I am here to talk about the HOPWA strategy: Reset, Renew, Recharge.

SLIDE 31

Reset, Renew, Recharge is going to be an overarching strategy that's designed to move the HOPWA program forward in new ways as HOPWA celebrates its 30-year anniversary. The HUD Office of HIV/AIDS Housing is launching the strategy as a forward thinking blueprint for advancing program design and core values that will positively impact the lives and housing stability of people living with HIV. It's intended to help communities achieve program excellence and positive community impact. And it will be client centered and have low barrier housing as an emphasis.

SLIDE 32

Kate Briddell: What do we mean by Reset, Renew, Recharge? Well, Resetting is resetting program goals to take into account the HOPWA modernization plans and budget projections and the lessons learned through HOPWA mod and COVID-19 responses. Renewal is renewing program focus to successfully implement HOPWA housing activities that meet the documented needs of people living with HIV and AIDS and incorporating race and health equity at all levels of program planning and operation. And Recharge, recharge program efforts to increase program capacity and impact, including training and use of best practices to ensure housing stability and positive outcomes and active engagement with new and existing community partners.

SLIDE 33

Kate Briddell: The vision for Reset, Renew, Recharge strategy is that HOPWA communities, grantees and project sponsors will embrace an expanded vision for the HOPWA program, understand and implement the regulations and the program's values, design activities to meet the documented needs in their community, deliver them in an equitable fashion, and be able to tell their story. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Crystal Pope who will continue to explain this new strategy.

SLIDE 34

Crystal Pope: Thank you. So HOPWA, actually the whole world, but HOPWA is at a point in time right now where lots of new things are happening that may be challenging but that also can provide opportunities for program improvements and progress. Lessons learned during the pandemic through the experience of the grantees already highly impacted by

modernization of the HOPWA formula, as well as best practices in delivery of client centered services, can provide valuable new ideas for moving the program forward in ways that will ultimately impact persons living with HIV in positive ways. So this Reset, Renew, Recharge, or 3R, we've been calling it, is an overarching strategy, as Kate mentioned, for HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing that's expected to be reflected in guidance, training and TA resources over the next few years. We wanted today to just briefly touch on some of the issues and activities that we expect to be included in the 3R strategy.

SLIDE 35

Crystal Pope: COVID-19. Although we're arguably still in the middle of managing HOPWA practice during COVID-19, the experiences of community leaders, grantees, project sponsors, clients and others already have provided ideas that can help inform future HOPWA planning and program design. And these are just a few examples - there are actually many more- but redefining client contact, including the strategic use of remote methods which we've talked about quite a bit and people have implemented on a local level, active outreach, improved client access, more frequent check-ins, client check-ins with staff. These are all things that will likely be relevant way beyond COVID.

Crystal Pope: Also streamlining some program operational procedures such as eliminating local requirements for wet or hard signatures and other activities that require in-person meetings and hard copies of paperwork. These are possible things for grantees to reconsider and look at their policies and procedures on those things in the future, as well as more flexible and individualized supportive services for our clients.

SLIDE 36

Crystal Pope: Related to HOPWA modernization, as Rita explained, beginning five years ago with the formula changes implemented through HOTMA, many grantees had to face that challenge of adapting to significant changes in their formula allocations, either increasing or decreasing. And as you've heard from OHH, the expected large decreases for some have been mitigated by both the stop loss procedure and the increases in the federal budget for HOPWA. However, many grantees that saw very large increases have been challenged to rethink their HOPWA program design, not just by increasing what already existed incrementally but by revisiting their whole program design with larger allocation amounts in mind.

Crystal Pope: As more grantees see the impact of those budget increases and as projections go out, everybody can look at what can be expected coming up in the near future, those experiences that the highly impacted grantees have had over the last five years and the kind of planning that was done can be very helpful in helping other communities find good ways, effective ways to increase permanent housing options for persons living with HIV

and AIDS, and to also ensure that they're best meeting the documented needs of HOPWA eligible households in their own communities.

SLIDE 37

Crystal Pope: Some key elements that have really become part of HOPWA's program core values are related to increasing the use of client-centered low barrier methods that promote empowerment, equity and long-term change for clients. Many grantees and organizations across programs, besides HOPWA with the homeless CoC, ESG program and many others, have demonstrated the need to include approaches such as these and some of them include consistent use of housing first, harm reduction methods, and specifically low barrier models for housing and the supportive services that are provided.

Crystal Pope: Active client engagement and empowerment, which includes engagement in developing housing plans, making sure those plans are made with significant client input and participation, as well as termination as a last resort. This has been part of HOPWA guidance since it was rolled out at the Institute in 2017 and emphasizes that termination, while sometimes unavoidable, should only be done under the most severe circumstances, and that staff should work to keep people engaged in the program to the greatest extent possible. Also ensuring racial and LGBTQ equity and utilizing a multicultural approach to agency practice. As you've heard, this is part also of HOPWA's Equity Initiative.

Crystal Pope: We also encourage grantees and sponsors to include people with lived experience in program planning and design and to provide system feedback. That has always been a best practice and is part of this going forward. And finally, to ensure that the kind of information that is provided to clients and the community as well as internal policies and procedures reflect these important values. You can expect to hear more about Reset, Renew, Recharge in the coming months and we look forward to working with you on this strategic program effort.

SLIDE 38

Crystal Pope: We can also expect a number of trainings and TA opportunities to be available in the coming months. These are currently in development. The first one here is HUD's 2nd Virtual CARES Act Conference, which is scheduled for January 24th and 25th. That will include three HOPWA specific sessions. Announcements about that and how you can go about registering for it should be going out in the near future. Some of the other HOPWA specific sessions that are currently in development include several that are related to HOPWA CV funding and the waivers that have been made available to grantees and project sponsors and how things are going to change as those waivers and a more procedural kind of thing, both related especially to inspection requirements as well as

changes in the FMR and rent standard adjustments post-waiver which we expect to see probably in December at dates yet to be announced.

Crystal Pope: We're also looking at HOPWA CV reporting, which some people have had challenges with. There will be some specific web meetings or webinars or other kinds of small sessions scheduled after the 1st of the year for that. We also are looking forward to discussing how programs can continue to address COVID-19 beyond CARES Act funding because we know as CARES Act funding comes to an end or we're reaching that point, that the pandemic is continuing and many adjustments will continue to have to be made on a local level, as well as starting to move into information related to the formula change and looking at best practices for HOPWA redesign, especially with increased funding, which is what we expect most grantees to see.

Crystal Pope: I would say just watch the HUD Exchange and HUD.gov and the listserv there for more information on actual dates and registration.

SLIDE 39

The resource list is here. We encourage you to make use of those. Those connect back to much more in depth information than we can present today related to formula modernization, to the Equal Access Rule and to all of the HOPWA guidance for COVID-19.

SLIDE 40

Crystal Pope: These are the links as well to make sure that you sign up for the listserv through hud.gov as well as on the HUD Exchange. If you are on both of those, you should be able to see any of the notices or announcements that come out that are relevant to the HOPWA program.

SLIDE 41

And finally, as always, we encourage you to reach out if you have questions. Submit your questions to the HOPWA Ask A Question desk on the HUD Exchange. We do try to turn those questions around with responses to you on a pretty quick basis. You can also request technical assistance, as people have mentioned before, through the HUD Exchange at this link. And with that, I will turn it back to you Kate to begin our Q&A period.

SLIDE 42

Kate Briddell: Thank you for that, Crystal. All right. Let me see what questions we have coming through the Q&A box. Please remember that if you have questions, they need to come through the Q&A box and not the chat box. We have one here. We are a project sponsor. How do we get involved

with the Equity Initiative? I can handle that if that's all right with folks. So you'll need to discuss this with your grantee. As indicated, we're developing a cohort of grantees to participate in developing and piloting the initiative. And while we expect this initiative to be inclusive, we want to coordinate this initiative through the HOPWA grantees as that is the entity HUD has a direct relationship with. We're also looking to include people with lived experience to be part of that planning committee.

Crystal Pope: We've also been asked whether there are sample policies and procedures for how to implement the Equal Access Rule.

Amy Palilonis: Sure. I can answer that one. We don't have sample HOPWA specific policies and procedures for the Equal Access Rule. But as I mentioned, we did develop an In-Focus brief that details actions that you can take to ensure equal access in your HOPWA programs. That In-Focus message is available on the HUD Exchange and I believe also was linked to in this presentation. But there's also a lot of resources that came out of the SNAPS office around equal access. And so we definitely encourage you to access and utilize the Equal Access Agency Assessment tool, which was actually just published earlier this month. That provides specific action steps for HUD grantees to meet the requirements of the Equal Access Rule in shelters and other facility-based settings.

Amy Palilonis: That tool is a companion piece to another resource called the Equal Access for Transgender People: Supporting Inclusive Housing and Shelters resource, which focuses on project level policies and procedures, requirements, and recommendations specific to single sex facilities as well as resources for creating documents for signage, intake forms and other written policies and procedures. As I mentioned, those documents came out of the SNAPS office and are geared towards homeless service providers, but they can definitely be tailored for HOPWA programs and a link to those are in that In-Focus message, and I'll also put a link in the chat to that resource.

Kate Briddell: Great, thanks Amy. Speaking of policies and procedures, we have one here that says, is there a deadline by when we have to have policies and procedures developed for the Equal Access Rule?

Amy Palilonis: The Equal Access Rule, especially the rule around gender identity, was published in 2016 and have been in effect for a few years. So it is HUD's expectation that HOPWA grantees have policies and procedures related to the Equal Access Rule. And if you don't have such policies now, you should definitely work to develop them as soon as possible. And if you have any questions about policies and procedures or are interested in TA around access rule, definitely go to the HUD Exchange and you can submit your questions or TA requests there.

Kate Briddell: Thank you.

Crystal Pope: Okay. Another is, when do you expect to know what the FY 22 allocations will be?

Rita Harcrow: Well, that's a good question. I wish we had a good answer for that. We won't really know what those allocations are until we have a full year budget passed and we're currently operating under a continuing resolution which keeps us at prorated level funding from the '21 appropriation. Once Congress passes FY 22 spending bill and the president signs off, then we will know for sure the dollar amount that we're working on allocating out to everyone. So stay tuned. See, I believe the current continuing resolution goes through the first week in December. So there should be more discussions coming up soon on this.

Kate Briddell: Great, thanks Rita. Here's an interesting one, Amy. What is the status of the Earned Income Disregard for HOPWA?

Amy Pallonis: That is a really good question. We were talking earlier about the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act, or HOTMA, which updated the HOPWA formula, but that law also made updates and changes to numerous HUD program statutes besides HOPWA. And so HOTMA actually eliminated Earned Income Disregard from the Section Eight statute, which directly affects the HOPWA program's authority to implement Earned Income Disregard. HUD is in the rulemaking process to implement this change and a proposed rule to implement the HOTMA changes to income and rent calculations was published back in 2019, and public comment was solicited at that time. And as you can imagine, HUD received an enormous number of public comments that are being addressed and a final rule is forthcoming. So really what that all means is that at this time, Earned Income Disregard is still allowed for HOPWA and should continue to be implemented until that final rule is published.

Kate Briddell: Thank you. Crystal, do you have anything?

Crystal Pope: How long do people have to spend their HOPWA CV funds?

Rita Harcrow: Grantees have three years from the date that's on their grant agreement so it's in line with other HOPWA awards. So you have three years. So check your grant agreement and then you'll measure it from there.

Kate Briddell: Here's one. Where are we expected to get our data for the Equity Initiative?

Amy Pallonis: I could take that one. As I said, that initiative is still in development and in the early stages of planning and hopefully we'll have some grantees and people with lived experience helping us develop that initiative. But I can just say right now that you would be using your existing program data, including the data you provide in your annual reports to HUD, so in your APR/CAPER, as well as any data provided through the Con Plan process about local demographics and about demographics and information about

people living with HIV in your community, and really the more client data that you have to do this equity work, the better.

Kate Briddell: Thanks.

Crystal Pope: And related to that, here's another that is asking, will all communities be required to participate in the Equity Initiative? We already have one started.

Rita Harcrow: I'll take it. Thanks for that question. That's a great question too. First of all, congratulations on having your own equity initiative started in your community. That's really great. For HOPWA, our Equity Initiative is still in the early stages, so we're still mapping out exactly what form that will take. What structure will it have, learning opportunities or direct TA or how that will come together. And that's part of the purpose of having this early cohort pilot that Amy has talked about and others. So if you have an initiative and have any work that you've started on it, I would say don't discontinue that. We're not trying to undo anything that's already in progress, but hopefully you would consider joining what we're doing and maybe help inform others through that pilot process.

Kate Briddell: Great. Thanks Rita. I have one here. You mentioned something about wet signatures. Is that a requirement from the HOPWA program? We've been using electronic signatures for our clients. Will we get dinged for that in monitoring?

Crystal Pope: I can address that. The HOPWA program doesn't have any specific requirements around signatures on program documentation. All of those types of requirements are local decisions. But having said that, if your project sponsor and the policies and procedures of your local grantee indicate a wet signature or a hard signature is required and you're not gathering those, then you would likely receive a negative monitoring from them. If you're a grantee, just be aware that there's no HOPWA regulatory or programmatic requirement to have those wet signatures on documentation. And just as we talked about earlier, I think we're finding that some of the more streamlined procedures that people have put in place during the pandemic are things to maybe rethink whether those are things that you could segue to in your community as well. But generally speaking, none of those are ever regulatory or required from HUD's point of view, they're local options.

Crystal Pope: I just want to mention too there are a number of questions that have come in about HOPWA operational things and some about waivers and other things related to the FMR. Those are not questions that we can address today but we strongly encourage everyone to put those kinds of questions into the AAQ. If you have individual scenarios, situations that you're seeing in your community right now and you want to use that as an example within your question to the AAQ, we will respond to those. And you can get some brief TA that way and get you going in the right direction. Rita, I think there have been some questions about the new

regulations and just clarifying what the process is going to be for that or what people can expect.

Rita Harcrow: Right. I could just say that that is definitely work in progress but we're not at this time allowed to talk about what's being drafted because of the nature of the regulations until it's ready to be issued as a proposed rule and at that time it will all be available for review. I don't have a timeline because it's work that goes through a lot of layers of review internally, but just so you know that we are working diligently on that and trying to update as much as we can based on comments that we've received over the many years.

Crystal Pope: Someone has also asked what's the expected start date of the 3R Initiative, meaning when do you expect program revisions to occur. Just to clarify, and Amy and Rita, you may want to add something to this, the 3R is really a strategy looking forward with the HOPWA program and it is starting now with this kind of as a rollout. So there aren't specific dates yet for anything related to that, when you have to have things in place, but there will be many other sessions that will come out and information that OHH will be providing in the future. So we promise people will get a heads up about that.

Rita Harcrow: I also see a question that it's been in here a few times about when we might announce the Competitive NOFO recipients. We are hoping to have that announcement, fingers crossed, in the next two to three weeks pending the final stages of the clearance process on that.

Kate Briddell: Here's one that I think that you all will be able to respond to easily. For the Equity Initiative, are there plans to update the demographic data elements in the CAPER so they more accurately reflect more expanded gender identity and sexual orientation options?

Amy Palilonis: I'll just say there is some work underway on that already. But that definitely, in the Equity Initiative, we are sort of looking at equity in the HOPWA program both from the federal level but also on the grantee and project sponsor level. So that's definitely something that we will continue to work on and look at and implement changes as we can in the confines of sort of the federal processes for implementing those types of changes in our forms and data collection.

Kate Briddell: Great. Thanks for that.

Crystal Pope: There's also, let me just add one more. This reads, the White House is developing an updated national HIV/AIDS strategy that will be released soon. Has the HOPWA team and HUD had input and will housing for people with HIV and AIDS be addressed?

Rita Harcrow: Yes, and yes. We're really pleased that we've been able to be a part of the discussions, part of the working group helping develop that next iteration of the national HIV/AIDS strategy. Some of the folks from

HOPWA that have been doing this work for a long time have had input as well as some new people in other areas of HUD, which is very exciting. So we're looking forward to those plans being rolled out.

Kate Briddell:

Great. Thank you for that. If we have not been able to get to a question that you might have asked in the chat box, it might be that it is more nuanced and would need more time than we have today. So please go ahead and put that in the AAQ. And I believe with that, we are going to conclude today's webinar. I want to thank you all for joining us today. Stay well and we look forward to working with you in the future. Thanks everyone.