



# **HOPWA/COVID-19 - STRMU: Office Hours**

October 22, 2020



# Presenters/Facilitators

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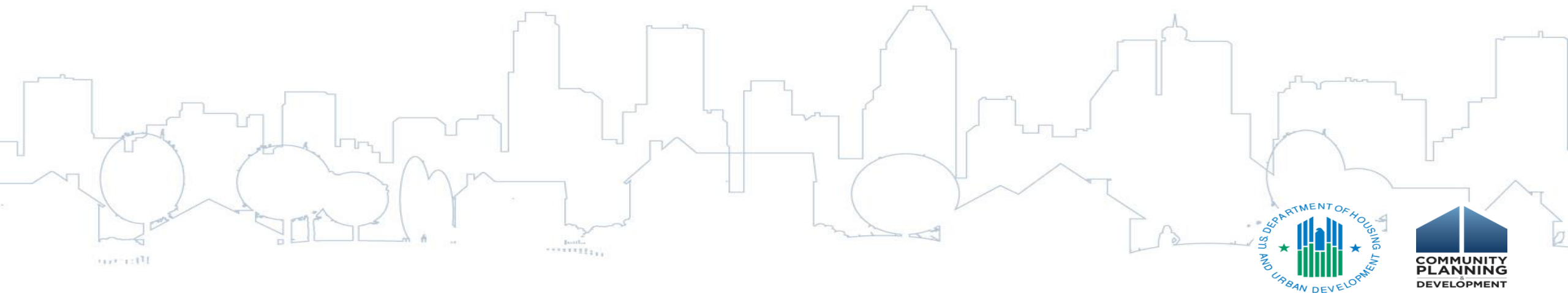
Ben Ayers – Deputy Director



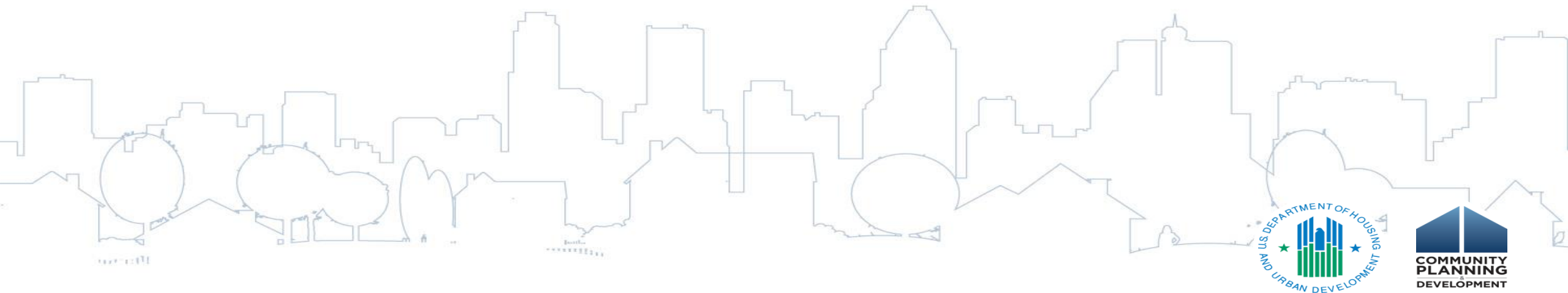
# Submit Your Questions

Please submit your questions using  
the Q&A feature.

(Please do not use the Chat feature.)



# REVIEW: HOPWA/COVID-19 FUNDING CATEGORIES



# STRMU Program Categories

STRMU funded by : Regular HOPWA Allocations	STRMU funded by: Regular HOPWA Allocations –Using the 5/22/20 Waiver option	STRMU funded by: CARES Act and by FY20 \$ designated for COVID-19
Eligible Households may receive:  Up to 21 weeks of assistance in a 52-week period	Eligible Households may receive:  Up to 12 months of assistance in a 12-month period as decided <b>on an individual household basis</b>	Eligible Households may receive:  Up to 24 months of assistance



# Identification of Funding Source(s)

Things to consider when deciding which funding stream to use:

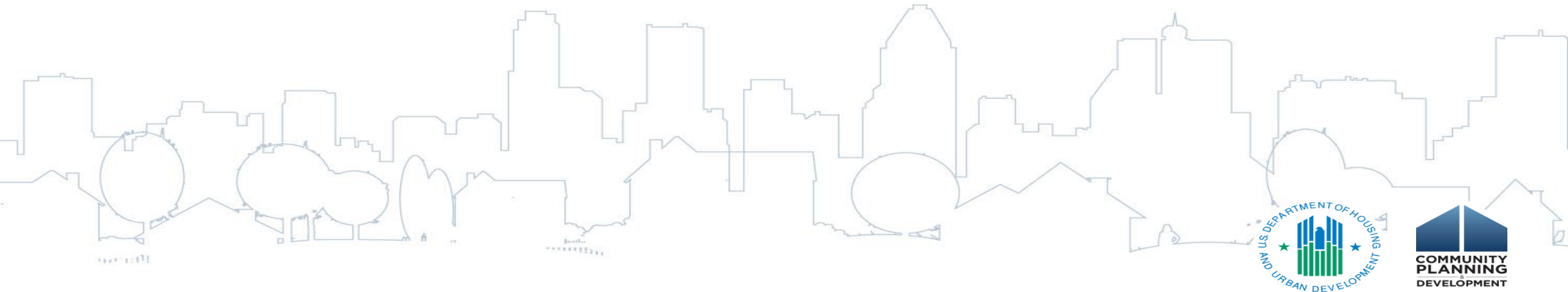
1. The amount of money available from Regular STRMU and CARES STRMU
2. The projected community need – how many, how much?
3. The availability and accessibility of other resources for rental and utility assistance

In order to do this, programs will need:

1. Running balances of available HOPWA STRMU and CARES STRMU funds;
2. Updated information on non-HOPWA rent/utility resources available;
3. Updates on need – how many clients are being served now and expected in future
4. An internal decision-making process



# STRMU PROGRAM DESIGN & START-UP



# HOPWA/COVID-19 STRMU Programs

## 3 STRMU FUNDING OPTIONS: 1 CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE

Consider your STRMU response during COVID-19 to be **one program** designed to assist those in need while your community faces the pandemic.

1. Set program goals for all STRMU assistance
2. Retool eligibility and assessment processes
3. Develop policies/procedures to guide how STRMU is provided

Note: Specific procedures WILL be needed for different funding streams, but the overall program can still be viewed and treated as one consolidated response.





# CARES Act STRMU Design

Some basic STRMU/COVID-19 Design Recommendations:

- Make sure the program is set up and described as supplemental STRMU assistance needed to **prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19**
- Make intake/access and assessments as **speedy and responsive** as possible
- Ensure that you add new policies & procedures, as required, but **keep them simple**
- Make decisions about the amount of assistance given to households on an **incremental basis** – not all up-front



# Targeting Assistance

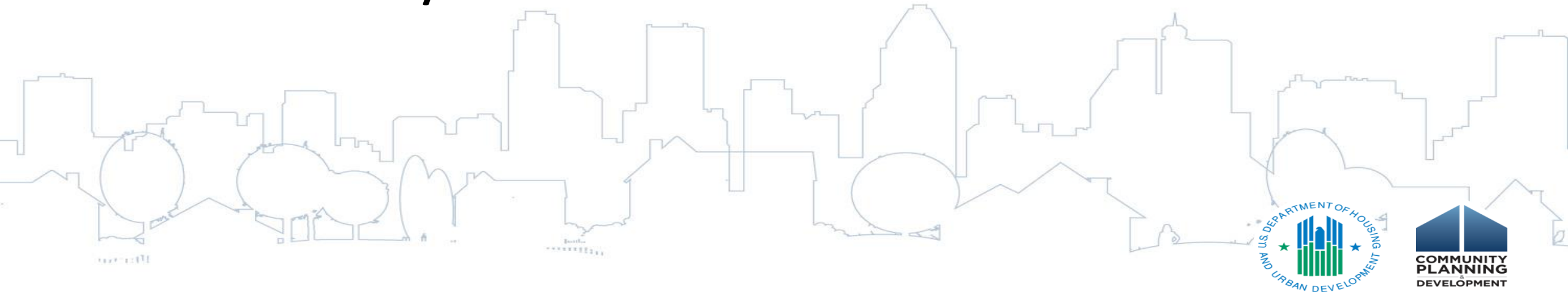
Grantees and Project sponsors may choose to target STRMU assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic to best meet community needs. **Strategies for targeting should be based on the amount of HOPWA funding available, other resources available, and their assessment of expected need locally.**

Some possible decision points could include:

- Targeting lower-income households (at less than 80% AMI)
- Remove existing STRMU assistance Caps (\$ level per HH, number of weeks)
- Add Caps, if needed, based on local HOPWA/COVID-19 planning
- Consider giving some priority to homeowners, for whom other emergency rent assistance programs do not apply



# HOPWA/COVID-19 STRMU PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS



# Assessment

## Practice Suggestions for Assessment:

**Conduct  
Regular  
Assessments!**

1. **Adapt existing assessment forms** to include questions relevant to COVID-19
2. Be as **flexible** as possible when assessing household needs for assistance based on the details and levels of local COVID-19 impact
3. Include direct and indirect ways the household is impacted by COVID-19 in **assessment notes**
4. Because client stability may be a longer-term (and possibly changing) issue during the pandemic, remember that you are assessing them at this point in time, but that further **assessment may be needed over time**
5. Remember that no immediate decision is needed on how many total weeks or months of STRMU should be given. Start by providing what is needed for a **reasonable time period** based on your assessment, budget and internal policies.



# Assessment

## Practice Suggestions for Ongoing Assessment Process:

1. Establish a **process for reassessments or check-ins** with STRMU households at regular intervals.
2. COVID-19 related impact on a family may be volatile and can change quickly. STRMU assistance to a household may need to stop and start over time but it is best to **keep cases “open” rather than treating them as one-time help**.
3. Regular assessments or check-ins can help **catch problems early**, whether rent related or for other critical family needs.
4. Ongoing assessments can also **address whether STRMU remains the best available solution** or if other rental assistance options are (or become) available.



# HOPWA Income Exclusion

NEW

## Unemployment Benefit from the August 8, 2020 Presidential Memorandum

The memorandum authorizes a \$400 per week of additional unemployment benefit paid to claimants through the **Lost Wages Assistance Program**. The \$400 weekly payment is funded by two sources. The Federal government contributes 75 percent (totaling \$300) and the state can contribute the remaining 25 percent (totaling \$100). Some states have opted to pay only the federal portion of \$300 per week, while other states have opted to pay the federal portion plus the state portion to equal \$400 per week.

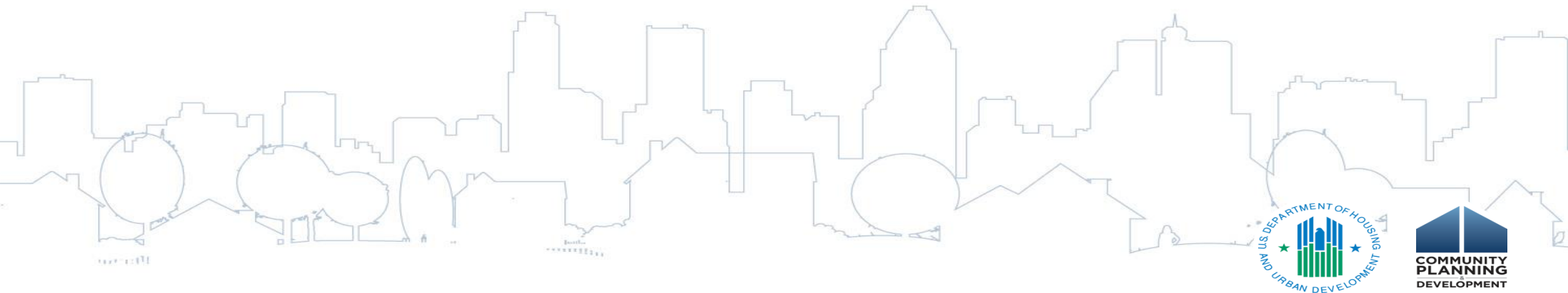
The HOPWA program will **exclude** the \$400 per week, or in some states \$300 per week, unemployment benefit from the income and rent calculation for participants. This specific unemployment benefit is excluded based on the PM authorizing the federal contribution through FEMA to provide assistance under the Stafford Act which is normally excludable income.

Link to Memorandum: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/memorandum-authorizing-needs-assistance-program-major-disaster-declarations-related-coronavirus-disease-2019/>



# OFFICE HOURS: STRMU

QUESTIONS!



# Resources

**[HOPWA Guidance for COVID- 19 Webpage on the HUD Exchange](#)**

**[Mega Waiver 1 \(April 2020\), and Mega Waiver 2 \(May 2020\)](#)**

Available waiver flexibilities

**[CPD Director Contact Information For Waiver Notification](#)**

Email addresses that must be utilized by grantees to notify CPD Directors of intent to utilize available waivers

**[CPD Program Formula Allocations and CARES Act Supplemental Funding for FY2020](#)**

**[HOPWA Notice CPD-20-05](#)**

**[HOPWA IDIS Set-Up and Draw Instructions for CARES Act Grants](#)**

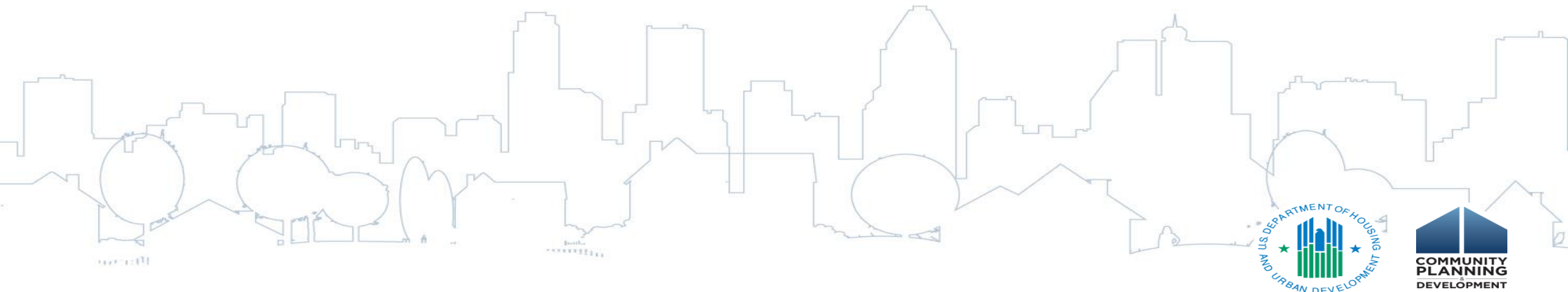




# Additional Resources

NLIHC COVID-19 Rental Assistance Database:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hLfybfo9NydIptQu5wghUpKXecimh3gaoqT7LU1JGc8/edit#gid=79194074>



# AAQ and TA Requests

**GET ANSWERS!**

**GET ASSISTANCE!**

## Answers:

Grantee and Sponsors may ask program, policy and COVID-related questions through the HOPWA AAQ:  
**HOPWA Ask A Question (AAQ) Portal**

## Technical Assistance:

HUD is making additional technical assistance (TA) available to grantees to support HOPWA/COVID-19 planning, program development, problem-solving. Those needing TA assistance in managing COVID-19-related program issues may submit an online request through the HUD Exchange at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/technical-assistance/>

