

Purpose and Background

This document will focus on coordinating **Emergency Solutions Grants COVID-19 (ESG-CV)** funding and the **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)** program to create surge capacity in **Coordinated Entry Systems (CES)**. Housing surges/fairs are concentrated, time-limited efforts that seek to house a large number of people over a short time frame. Communities can utilize a [housing surge/housing fair](#) approach to equitably expedite referrals and lease-ups of EHV and other resources, such as HOME-ARP. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of specific activities and costs that may be funded with ESG-CV to equitably expedite successful EHV referrals and placements through a housing surge/fair approach. For more on how ESG-CV can be used generally to support eligible EHV households, please see: [Emergency Housing Vouchers Funding Briefs: ESG/ESG-CV RRH and HP](#).

Coordinated Entry System (CES)

As stated in [Notice CPD-17-01](#), "HUD requires each CoC to establish and operate a "centralized or coordinated assessment system" (referred to as "coordinated entry" or "coordinated entry process") with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources, including mainstream resources. Both the CoC and ESG Program interim rules require the use of the CoC's coordinated entry process, provided that it meets HUD requirements. Coordinated entry processes are intended to help communities prioritize people who are most in need of assistance." Per [Notice PIH 2021-15](#), The EHV program requires that PHAs enter a partnership with at least one local CoC and accept direct referrals for EHV from CES.

Summary of Resources to Consider for Coordination Efforts

ESG-CV

ESG funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (**ESG-CV**) requires that funds must be used to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus." All [ESG-CV Notice flexibilities also apply to](#) annual ESG funds (FY 2020 and older) utilized to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus" that meet the conditions in Section IV of the notice.

EHV

The [EHV program](#), funded by the **American Rescue Plan (ARP)**, provides 70,000 housing vouchers through Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to assist people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness; are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless. Implementation of EHV must be done in partnership with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Victim Services Providers (VSPs). For program details, see [Notice PIH 2021-15](#).

Centering Racial Equity in Housing Strategies

The expanded use of ESG-CV funds in combination with EHV provides an opportunity for communities to [advance racial equity](#) for populations historically overrepresented in homeless populations, underserved by the homeless services system, and for hard-to-reach communities. Working with persons with lived expertise of homelessness to determine additional access points and hire additional staff as well as coordinating with organizations with a strong presence and high levels of trust with communities of color can create more equitable access to EHV. Additionally, for purposes of ESG-CV use, funds may be awarded by recipients and sub-recipients to Tribes and Tribally-Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs). While Tribes and [Tribally Designated Housing Entities](#) did not receive EHV awards, the CARES Act provided additional funding to the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) and Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG). For additional information, see [ONAP CARES Act](#). For more on centering racial equity in EHV implementation, see the [Recording](#) and [Presentation Materials](#) for the [EHV Office Hours](#) session: Advancing Equity Using EHV. For more on centering racial equity in overall rehousing efforts see [Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity](#). As a note, Coordinated Entry should obtain feedback from providers utilizing EHV to understand where the process could be improved.

Coordinating ESG-CV with other Funding Streams to Expand CE Activities

ESG-CV or annual ESG funding used to prevent, prepare for or respond to coronavirus allows for flexibility and [additional eligible activities](#) to expand coordinated entry activities. In addition, annual ESG funds that are not targeted to preventing, preparing for, and responding to coronavirus may also be used to [support CE activities](#).

The following chart details some examples of eligible uses and allowable costs for utilizing ESG-CV to enhance CE and to expedite successful EHV referrals and placements.

Using ESG-CV to Create Surge Capacity in Coordinated Entry for EHV's

ESG-CV Eligible Uses	ESG-CV Allowable Costs Related to Coordinated Entry	How to leverage to support CES referrals to EHV's and other resources
Street Outreach Case Management	Case management services for unsheltered households to engage them in services and connect them to the CES.	Connection to CES can help support the referral of households experiencing unsheltered homelessness to EHV's.
Update, Enhance, and Operate CES under 24 CFR 576.400(d)	CES assessors; temporary access points; marketing materials. For new activities under the ESG-CV Notice, requirements to participate in accordance with ESG written standards and participate in HMIS are waived for costs incurred between the beginning of a community's coronavirus response (January 21, 2020 or later) and June 30, 2020.	Use funds to increase staffing capacity in order to expand assessment and referral operations, develop new assessment processes and procedures for assessing populations eligible for EHV's that are new to CES (such as individuals Moving On from permanent supportive housing), and produce new marketing materials in relevant local languages. When expanding capacity, consider engaging organizations with a high-level of trust in communities of color as access points.
Housing Search and Placement*	Assessment of housing barriers, needs and preferences; action plan for housing location; housing search; outreach to, and negotiation with landlord/owner; assistance with submitting rental applications and understanding leases; assessment of housing for compliance with ESG requirements for habitability, lead-based paint, and rent reasonableness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with obtaining utilities and making moving arrangements • Tenant counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to develop the housing plan and support housing search efforts for participants that are eligible for and being enrolled in both EHV and rapid rehousing (RRH) programs. • Fund landlord recruitment and retention activities to expand the pool of units available. If it would be helpful to the PHA, use funds to support Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections for units identified for dual EHV/RRH participants. • Use increased staffing capacity to assist tenants with document collection and any other support needed to successfully lease-up. • Use to support the review of CES data regularly to identify and address disparities in lease up rates and time from voucher issuance to lease up.
Housing Stability Case Management	Up to 60 days of case management support to assist program participants in obtaining new housing, utilizing CES to conduct the initial evaluation and re-evaluation, coordinating services and benefits, monitoring and evaluation of program participant progress, developing individualized housing and service plans.	Use to support lease-ups for participants that are eligible for and being enrolled in both EHV and RRH programs.
Hazard Pay	Hazard pay for housing navigators	Provide hazard pay to better engage and retain housing navigators.
Landlord Incentives*	Up to 3x rent charged for unit; signing bonuses; security deposits; damage repair not covered by security deposit; cost of extra cleaning or maintenance.	Use to recruit landlords that can offer units for participants that are eligible for and being enrolled in both EHV and RRH programs.
Volunteer Incentives	Limitations on eligible activities are waived, allowing the payment of reasonable costs of volunteer incentives to help provide the following services: street outreach, emergency shelter, essential services, and housing relocation and stabilization services.	Use incentives to support volunteers that can help to support CES activities related to expediting lease-ups for participants that are eligible for and being enrolled in both EHV and RRH programs.

* This activity can also be funded with EHV resources for eligible EHV participants. ESG/ESG-CV funds used must provide different types of assistance than that being provided to a participant by any other public sources. For activities eligible to be funded by both ESG/ESG-CV and the EHV series fee, CoCs and PHAs should carefully consider how best to strategically use each program's resources to help participants obtain housing quickly. The distinct activities and costs that will be covered by each source should be clearly documented and adequate procedures must be established and maintained to prevent the duplication of benefits.

Potential Approaches to Support an Increase in Surge Capacity

ESG-CV Creative Strategies to Create Surge Capacity in CES	
Utilize 'batch' referral process	One of the key roles for CES in housing surges/fairs is to be able to provide referrals by the batch (e.g., 25, 50, 100, 200 referrals at a time, etc.) to providers, instead of one at a time. If the CES is not currently doing so, ESG-CV funds can be used to build out processes that make this possible, and to fund extra staff time for the extensive, frequent coordination that needs to happen after a batch of referrals is sent in order to ensure that referrals quickly turn to lease-ups.
Create marketing materials in various languages and distribute throughout the CoC	Use census data to identify the most common languages spoken in your CoC and create marketing materials in those languages. Distribute and display new marketing materials in places and with organizations frequented by individuals at-risk for or experiencing homelessness.
Hire additional assessors to reach more people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness	Hire staff primarily focused on assessing people for and referring individuals and families to EHV, and other housing resources. Additionally, locate additional assessors within community organizations and offices that see high numbers of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Remember that assessors need to serve households who qualify for ESG-CV assistance. Consider engaging people with lived experience (PWLE) in your hiring decisions and other creative staffing options .
Expand access points	Set up temporary access points in underserved communities at churches, libraries, community centers, etc., or areas with an increased presence of individuals and families at-risk or experiencing homelessness (e.g., eviction court).
Support community organizations	Fund dedicated positions at community-based organizations with trust in communities of color to help connect individuals to housing and create additional access points. This provides an opportunity to promote equity in rehousing, allowing communities to fund support at organizations in overrepresented, underserved, and hard to reach communities.

Community Spotlight – Honolulu, HI

In May 2021, Oahu Housing Now (OHN) – a multi-agency project in the City and County of Honolulu, Hawai'i – held its first of a series of housing fairs with a goal of housing 300 households experiencing homelessness over six months. Housing fairs are intensive, time-limited efforts to house large numbers of households in a short period of time. By providing 'batch' referrals (as described above) and utilizing housing fairs, the partners involved were able to significantly increase the pace of RRH enrollments and lease-ups. More information on OHN can be found here [About OHN](#); and [Honolulu Housing Fair](#).

Things to Consider

There are several key questions and considerations that recipients should think about when strategizing to coordinate ESG-CV with EHV and other funding sources, including:

- With which partners does the CoC have MOUs? Examining existing partnerships that could be leveraged for referrals and service coordination is a good starting point to assess available resources.
- Does the CoC have MOUs with agencies that serve historically underrepresented populations? Examine opportunities through existing or new partnerships.
- Does the CoC have MOUs with organizations that can help expedite eligibility paperwork? Identify the strengths and skillsets of partnerships that could be utilized to speed up housing placement.

Additionally, an MOU should be a living document. Recipients should monitor working relationships and adjust to respond to community needs.

Finally, when [coordinating ESG-CV and EHV funding sources](#) for the same individual or household, it is imperative to ensure that program recipients meet eligibility requirements for both funding sources. In order to pair EHV with ESG/ESG-CV Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services, households must be: 1) prioritized and eligible for EHV (see [Notice PIH 2021-15](#)), and 2) prioritized and [eligible for ESG/ESG-CV](#) – in general, the household must enroll in ESG/ESG-CV before or in conjunction with leasing and move-in to a unit subsidized with an EHV. Thus, incorporating coordinated entry and prioritization efforts is critical to utilizing ESG-CV funds to support EHV participants.