The COVID-19 Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG-CV) program provides an unprecedented amount of funding to recipients compared to the annual allocation amounts under the Emergency Solutions Grants program (ESG). Between 2011–2019, the ESG program was funded at an annual average of $265,178,150 while the ESG-CV program is funded at $3,960,000,000. That is almost 15 times the annual ESG funding amount. Lack of capacity at the recipient-level may lead to delays in funding allocations, contractual agreements, reimbursement requests, and monitoring and evaluation activities. Recipients will need to expand staffing resources to successfully administer their ESG-CV grant given the size of the funding.

While ESG-CV grants have a higher cap on administration—from 7.5 percent to 10 percent—recipients may still struggle to leverage internal existing staff or hire new staff to administer their ESG-CV grant. Additionally, many recipients are currently facing a hiring freeze that limits their options to increase administrative capacity. Recipients should attempt to convince leadership that administrative staff for the ESG-CV grant is an off-budget expense as the increased 10 percent administration limit makes hiring staff less of a burden on recipients' general budget. This document provides recommendations on increasing recipient capacity for administration of the ESG-CV grant, hiring options, and advancing racial equity through hiring.

Hiring Practices

Recipients should consider the following hiring practices:

- Hiring Term-Limited Staff: Recipients may need to hire term-limited staff to administer their ESG-CV grant, as funds must be expended by September 30, 2022. Hiring staff for term-limited positions is a model that can develop professional skills in younger staff looking to start their professional careers. Utilizing term-limited hiring practices also allows recipients to recruit for specific skillsets and expertise relevant to the administrative staff needs for administering the ESG-CV grant (e.g., skillsets that support contract management; financial management including reimbursement requests, monitoring, training, and outreach to subrecipients). Recipients may also be able to engage recently retired staff to return or engage staff facing furlough or termination to help administer the ESG-CV grant for a term-limited position. Recipients need to clearly identify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for term-limited staff in hiring documents and contracts.

> **ESG-CV Grants Management Role Examples**
>
> Grants Management
>
> - Procurement activities, review, and award
> - Contract creation, review, and execution
> - Subrecipient training and knowledge sharing for the ESG-CV notice
>
> Financial Management
>
> - Budget creation, review, and reallocation
> - Reimbursement review and payment
>
> Data Collection and Reporting
>
> - Coordination with HMIS Lead on project setup
> - Quarterly reporting submission
>
> Monitoring
>
> - Review of client eligibility, eligible expense(s), and contract fidelity

- Hiring with a Mentoring and Coaching Model: Recipients can leverage existing internal staff as mentors and coaches to cross-train other employees to minimize the impact of staffing shortages. Recipients must ensure that ESG programmatic knowledge is not limited to select staff but rather shared through mentoring or coaching. This strategy allows recipients to spread the knowledge and increased burden of administering the ESG-CV grant, mitigate the loss of knowledge within a singular staffing model, and provide opportunities for professional growth to those being mentored and coached.

- Hiring Staff with Lived Experience: HUD has made it clear that individuals who have experienced homelessness must be included in the Continuum of Care (CoC) decision-making process. Recipients should consider hiring those with the lived experience of homelessness to administer the ESG-CV grant. Individuals with lived expertise bring valuable insight and realism to the work. Recipients should evaluate employment requirements, such as

higher education degrees, to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to hiring persons with lived expertise for grant administration. Previous experience and educational requirements should be the minimum needed to effectively conduct the work and other types of experience should be equal to formal education and training.

- Contracting with Professional Services Consulting Firms: Professional services consulting could expand capacity for the administration of the ESG-CV grant. There are firms that assist recipients with various grant administration activities including the development of the local Consolidated Plan. These firms can contract with recipients to provide instant capacity and program knowledge. This model eliminates the need to reassign or terminate staff after ESG-CV-funded activities wind down; however, it can be more costly.

- Advancing Racial Equity through Hiring: The staff administering ESG-CV grants may lack racial and ethnic diversity. HUD supports centering racial equity in all aspects of the homeless service system, including the administration of the ESG program. Recipients should engage with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) populations throughout the recruitment, interview, selection, and hiring processes. Recipients should target recruitment to the BIPOC populations within their community who have transitioned out of homelessness. Review [Equity Capacity Building: Hiring, Supervision, Training](#) for more targeted information on hiring practices and procedures that advance racial equity. Remember to be thoughtful and intentional about hiring practices to successfully promote racial equity and make a plan to retain BIPOC staff when the ESG-CV funding sunsets.

Workplace Staffing Considerations

Recipients should consider implementing the following workplace staffing arrangements:

- Remote Work During COVID-19: Recipients should consider the use of remote work arrangements in hiring staff to support ESG-CV administration activities. Technological advances have made it possible to work efficiently in a remote environment with non-traditional hours. This flexibility is particularly salient during the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to virtual schooling, childcare, and caregiving of individuals with a disability. This flexibility can also eliminate the need to fund hazard or crisis pay. Remote work provides flexibility for communities that might be experiencing surges in COVID-19 cases or reinstating stay-at-home orders.

- Remote ESG-CV Administration: The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many recipients to change their stance on office-based staff versus home-based staff. Recipients have been slower than businesses to adopt a more flexible home-based staffing model. Recipients can find it difficult to administer federal grant programs without the infrastructure an office environment allows (conference rooms, filing cabinets, in-person meetings, etc.). Recipients should consider hiring and maintaining a workforce that has flexibility during and after the pandemic. Recipients may need to consider developing a home-based staff infrastructure that could include:

  o Technology: computers, laptops, phones, printers, scanners, virtual private network (VPN) access to recipient data and financial systems, licensure for document management software, contracting software that eliminates the need for traditional paper-based processing, and software that supports electronic reimbursement requests.

  o Remote supervision: [Remote Supervision Tips for Homeless Service Providers.](#)

  o Remote case management: [What to Expect from Remote Case Management](#); [Privacy Considerations: Direct Service Staff Remote Work.](#)

  o Virtual habitability inspections.

  o Other resources:

    ▪ [How to Operate as a Remote Workplace During a Public Health Crisis.](#)

    ▪ [Best Practices for Mobile Advocacy.](#)

    ▪ [Using Technology to Communicate with Survivors During a Public Health Crisis.](#)