HOPWA RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Resource Identification (Resource ID) is a HOPWA funding activity intended to help grantees establish, coordinate, and develop housing assistance resources in a community and to conduct research or carry out activities to determine the feasibility of specific housing-related initiatives. Resource ID is defined by regulation in *24 CFR Part 574.300 Eligible Activities*.

This resource is prepared by technical assistance providers and intended to help grantees and project sponsors understand HOPWA program guidance. The contents of this document, except when based on statutory or regulatory authority or law, do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

OVERVIEW

Resource ID is broad and flexible. It can be used in a variety of ways to develop and enhance community housing resources for persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Unlike direct service delivery to clients, Resource ID is focused on system-level activities to increase access to housing for PLWHA. Resource ID cannot be used for individual client placement in or access to housing, which are activities more in line with HOPWA Permanent Housing Placement and Housing Information services.

Resource ID may be utilized to fund activities carried out by staff at either the grantee or the project sponsor level or may be used to contract for consultants or other entities to carry out planned activities. Grantees are encouraged to consider ways in which the strategic use of Resource ID could help build and improve their community's system of HIV/AIDS housing and to assure that funded activities are tied to documented community needs.

RESOURCE ID ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Grantees may consider a range of Resource ID-funded activities designed to improve access to housing resources, increase coordination across funding systems, conduct housing needs assessments, develop data sources, and many others. The categories listed below include some of the most commonly implemented Resource ID activities.

1 DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING RESOURCES

The use of Resource ID funding allows grantees to build area- or community-wide housing resources that will benefit PLWHA within the covered Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA). Programs developed with Resource ID often result in housing resources that benefit all Project Sponsors and the clients they serve, which can be both more efficient and more effective than each individual organization working independently.

Resource ID activities to develop community housing resources should build on and complement the work of all Project Sponsors.

Additionally, Resource ID-funded programs can help address access to and leveraging of mainstream housing to better meet the needs of PLWHA, including targeted outreach and relationship-building with public housing authorities (PHAs). Some common activities include:

- ***Outreach and relationship building with landlords***. While HOPWA Project Sponsors, especially those delivering HOPWA Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), must engage in landlord outreach, staff size and caseloads may limit an organization's ability to perform these activities. A program specifically designed to build landlord relationships, develop lists of landlords willing to rent to clients, and otherwise broaden the "base" of available housing can benefit the entire system of HOPWA services.

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HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- *Identify and track housing resources and vacancies*. Similarly, Resource ID could be used to create and maintain lists of housing resources, including private landlords, facility-based housing funded through all sources, units that may be affordable without subsidies, and other similar information.

- *Leverage mainstream housing for PLWHA*. A Resource ID-funded program can help leverage additional housing through a concentrated effort to work closely with housing authorities, LIHTC projects, HOME, and other HUD funding sources with the goal of prioritizing PLWHA on waitlists, arranging set-asides, combining funding sources to develop housing, and other ways to increase housing and housing access.

- *Interface with Public Housing Authorities (PHA)*. A program designed to engage regularly with housing authorities can result in closer relationships, better PHA understanding of PLWHA housing needs, and possible set-aside vouchers or priority for PLWHA. Targeted use of Resource ID programs to build connections with PHAs, especially for balance of state HOPWA programs that involve multiple PHAs throughout the coverage area, can increase productive partnerships that will benefit programs and their clients.

- *Establish/maintain housing information websites*. Some HOPWA grantees have developed housing websites for use by case managers and clients, to help locate appropriate affordable housing and to disseminate other information useful to finding and maintaining housing.

2   SYSTEM COORDINATION

Resource ID funding can be used as a catalyst to begin improving coordination or to enhance efforts already underway. The impact of HOPWA Modernization on many grantees is an opportunity for communities to engage in meaningful planning efforts that will improve partnerships, increase coordination, and ensure that the system of HIV/AIDS housing, including HOPWA funding, truly addresses the greatest community needs among PLWHA.

Some activities to consider include:

- *Create and lead collaborative efforts*. Resource ID can fund efforts to initiate and maintain collaborative work designed to improve housing systems. Planning groups focused on program design improvements, housing expansion, and other related issues can greatly benefit from having dedicated staff to help such efforts move forward and succeed.

- *Coordinate housing case management efforts across providers*. Programs can include elements designed to coordinate housing case management activities, with the goal of improving consistency and communication, and implementing best practices.

- *Build/maintain an HIV Housing Care Continuum effort*. Another way to utilize Resource ID is in support of community efforts to build and monitor an HIV Housing Care Continuum. Having such a continuum in place — including collection of data — can help identify successes and gaps in care experienced by PLWHA receiving HIV housing assistance. Especially when done as a HOPWA/Ryan White partnership, this work can lead to program improvements and improved health outcomes.

3 NEEDS ASSESSSMENT AND RESEARCH

Resource ID provides many possible opportunities to assess the needs of PLWHA in a community. Such efforts can include community-wide assessments or more modest activities designed to increase grantee knowledge about PLWHA needs. Knowing more about the characteristics of your target population, their housing and service needs and challenges, plus acquiring up-to-date information about the availability of decent affordable housing can be helpful in numerous ways.

This type of data and information can:
- Help grantees make informed decisions about system design and how to best use and prioritize limited HOPWA funds
- Identify system gaps or additional needs that are not being addressed
- Inform the need for specific, leveraged resources
- Document the need for priorities or set-asides for PLWHA by other mainstream resources
- Provide an opportunity to listen directly to clients through qualitative data efforts
- Inform the Con Plan process.

Some specific activities that may be beneficial to community and grantee planning include the following:

- ***Collect and analyze local HIV housing-related data***. There are many different ways to collect and analyze local data related to housing and housing stability. Resource ID can support efforts to implement or expand data sources and reports as part of an overall community needs assessment on HIV/AIDS housing. Careful analysis of data on PLWHA needs can help leaders communicate more effectively about program impact and service gaps as they work to establish HOPWA priorities and leverage other community resources.
- ***Fund client surveys***. This can include development and implementation of client surveys to produce information on housing needs, client stability levels, gaps, and other data. Programs may also work collaboratively with local Ryan White programs to add housing stability-related questions to the RW statewide needs assessment.
- ***Conduct housing market studies***. Such studies can help establish a baseline of information about available housing and its affordability, and can add important detail to the community's Consolidated Plan.
- ***Conduct client focus groups***. Client focus groups are an excellent source of qualitative data, providing confidential feedback on client needs, desires, and experiences with the existing system of care. Such groups also provide an important opportunity for PLWHA to have a voice related to their care.
- ***Hire consultants/contractors***. It is often the case that grantees do not have the internal bandwidth or expertise to conduct a community-wide HIV/AIDS needs assessment. Resource ID funds may be used to contract for assessment services, to enhance what can be produced to support program planning and design.

4 HOPWA TRAINING COSTS

Attendance at some HUD-approved HOPWA trainings, including certain national conferences, meetings, and training institutes can be covered partially or in full by Resource ID. Note, however, that the regulations and guidance place limitations on training costs, including travel and attendance at national or regional conferences.

Unless approved by HUD, HOPWA training costs are typically charged to the Grantee or Project Sponsor Administration line item, or to other non-HOPWA funding sources. During each year, HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH) publishes notices and listserv messages about major trainings or conference events that are approved to be paid for through Resource ID funding. In instances where HUD has approved Resource ID to cover portions of training or conference fees, any attending grantee must have Resource ID included in their Annual Action Plan or Grant Agreement in order to bill to this HOPWA line item. Similarly, project sponsors must have Resource ID in their contract with the grantee. Watch for HOPWA Listserv messages throughout the year to find trainings that are approved and learn how costs can be charged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Resource ID FAQ:
  https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/481/can-hopwa-funds-be-used-for-costs-to-conduct-comprehensive-planning/
- HOPWA AAQ:
  https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/my-question/

CONCLUSION

HOPWA Resource Identification funds can provide the means for grantees to expand and improve coordination, expand housing resources, conduct planning and needs assessments, implement housing best practices, and make many other system improvements. Grantees should consider ways in which the strategic use of this HOPWA funding activity could increase program effectiveness and assure that HOPWA funding is focused on the documented housing needs of PLWHA.