

June 13, 2017

HOPWA In Focus: Modernization Next Steps

Greetings HOPWA Grantees, Project Sponsors, and Friends,

The Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program recently changed to better reflect current HIV epidemic trends with the passing and signing of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA), Public Law 114-201 in July, 2016.

A few of the coming changes for the HOPWA Formula:

- The HOPWA formula changes will be effective for the 2017 allocation year;
- The HOPWA formula will now be based on “living with HIV” data instead of “cumulative AIDS” data;
- The old requirement that 25% of funds be distributed to cities based on AIDS incidence is removed, and replaced with a new requirement that 25% of funds be distributed based on local Fair Market Rents and poverty rates; and
- The modernized formula will be phased in over 5 years with a stop-loss provision, to avoid highly volatile shifts in either direction for any one jurisdiction.

The 2017 Spending Bill released on May 1, 2017 included a \$21 million increase to the HOPWA appropriation. HOPWA formula jurisdictional allocations are being calculated based on that increased budget, the new HOPWA formula, and the stop-loss provision. Jurisdictions will know their 2017 award amounts within the next few days. In the meantime, I'd like to address grantee and community concerns about HOPWA Formula Modernization and what plans are in place to help smooth the transition to the new formula.

As we ask our grantees to be thoughtful in planning for changes occurring with HOPWA Modernization, we also realize the need to be thoughtful in the guidance and resources we provide to assist in this transition. The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH) has established a set of values to guide the next steps for implementing HOPWA Modernization.

Those values are:

- (1) No person should become homeless as the result of HOPWA Modernization;*
- (2) All funds should be used to meet the needs of eligible households, with no funds recaptured from grants;*
- (3) Grants should ensure their project designs meet the changing needs of the modern HIV epidemic, with the goal of positive health outcomes and reduced viral loads for HOPWA-assisted households.*

With these values guiding us, the OHH Team prepares to implement changes to the HOPWA program under HOTMA. OHH is taking a multi-level approach to ensure all HOPWA grantees and communities have information and support to develop long-term plans. Upcoming resources include:

- **HOPWA Modernization Webinar** – All HOPWA grantees and project sponsors will be invited to a webinar, tentatively planned for July, that will give an overview of coming HOPWA formula changes and resources available to assist impacted communities. More information on how to participate in the webinar will be sent out through the HOPWA listserv.
- **Technical Assistance for Highly Impacted Communities** – Grantees projected to experience significant gains or losses in funding will receive direct assistance from HOPWA technical assistance experts.
- **The HOPWA Institute** – Grantees and many project sponsors should already be making plans to attend The HOPWA Institute planned for August 9-11 in Tampa, Florida. [Register for the Institute on the HUD Exchange](#).
- **HOPWA Modernization Toolkit** – Coming later in 2017, the toolkit will provide valuable resources for all HOPWA communities for assessing need, developing long-term strategies, and evaluating and adapting program design. When available, the toolkit will be posted on the HOPWA page on the HUD Exchange.

What can you do locally? Grantees, project sponsors, and stakeholders are encouraged to continue preparing their communities by active participation in the Consolidated Plan process. Information about local consolidated planning can be found on the [CPD Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and CAPERs page](#). If your community has specific concerns about HOPWA modernization – or HOPWA in general, including program operations, reporting, or eligible activities – the [HOPWA "Ask a Question" desk](#) is open for you.

HUD will continue to provide updates on the [HOPWA formula modernization page](#).

Thank you all for your continued work providing safe, decent and affordable housing and supports to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Sincerely,

Rita

Rita Flegel
Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing