



OREGON HOUSING *and*
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Dear Partners,

Thank you for your interest in the Emergency Solutions Grants – Coronavirus Wave 2 (ESG-CV2) Request for Applications (RFA). We know there is a great amount of need across the state, and we look forward to seeing the creativity and collaboration in your applications. The core goal of these funds, as defined by the US Department of Urban Development (HUD), is to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts created by coronavirus.” OHCS has also defined some priorities specific to Oregon, which can be found in the [materials related to the RFA](#).

An essential part of responding to homelessness for many individuals and families, and in alignment with both HUD & OHCS’ priorities, is supporting them in developing a source of income, an important factor in maintaining housing stability. Research has repeatedly observed a relationship between experiencing a disability and homelessness for many populations, and for those who are unable to work due to a disability, accessing income can be extremely difficult. Social Security disability benefits are intended to provide a source of income for people who face such circumstances. However, for many people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and qualify for assistance, navigating and completing the application process to access these benefits can be an insurmountable task without help. When Oregonians are unable to access their Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and the State of Oregon loses out on federal support.

The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model has been designed to specifically address this issue. As a national best practice model SOAR can be a highly effective way to connect people with income through benefits and help to end homelessness for many individuals and families. This is a critical time to consider strategies that maximize health and safety through sustainable outcomes in permanent housing. [Visit this site to learn more about the SOAR model.](#)

It is with these and other considerations in mind that I want to call your attention to SOAR services as an allowable use of ESG-CV2 funds, which can be considered as you engage in planning processes and develop your applications. Specifically:

- The Homelessness prevention component (576.103) and Rapid-Rehousing assistance component (576.104) both allow for the Housing relocation and stabilization services to be provided under that component: “The rapid re-housing assistance must be provided



in accordance with the housing relocation and stabilization services requirements in § 576.105”

- The housing relocation and stabilization services (576.105) includes housing stability case management, which specifically includes: (576.105 (b)(2)(D)): “(D) Developing, securing, and coordinating services and obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits;”
- The street outreach component includes case management (576.101 (a)(2)): “The cost of assessing housing and service needs, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant. Eligible services and activities are as follows: using the centralized or coordinated assessment system as required under § 576.400(d); conducting the initial evaluation required under § 576.401(a), including verifying and documenting eligibility; counseling; developing, securing and coordinating services; obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits; monitoring and evaluating program participant progress; providing information and referrals to other providers; and developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.”
- The emergency shelter component also includes case management, which includes this same specific inclusion (576.102 (a)(1)(i)(D)): “Developing, securing, and coordinating services and obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits;”

Supporting Sustainable System Change

The thought of starting a new program or expanding a current program with limited duration funding can, for good reasons, give pause to the thought of moving forward. However, doing so can also be a catalyst for growth by clearly demonstrating both the need for these services and the positive outcomes that they can yield. SOAR services play an important role within an effective homeless services system. As a state, Oregon is in the beginning stages of developing SOAR as a system. There have been a number of individual programs and providers who have been delivering these kinds of services for many years and helped many Oregonians in need. However, Oregon has not previously developed a sustainable statewide framework to support a larger SOAR initiative. There will be many steppingstones along the way to achieving the goal of a more robust service system, and we consider this ESG-CV2 RFA one important stone.

If you have questions regarding the RFA please see the materials provided on the OHCS website. For more general questions about the SOAR model feel free to reach out directly to [Shawnn Hartley](#), SOAR State Team Lead.

Best regards,



Andrea Bell

Director of Housing Stabilization

