

Frequently Asked Questions:

From the Expansion Webinar 9/28/2024

Are landlord associations eligible to apply for this grant to be managed by the association to help prevent evictions by landlords within their specific association? Landlord associations would not be the best fit for the shelter diversion model, given the emphasis on individual and family engagement/case management. Additionally, eviction prevention is not the focus of this model. Shelter Division grantees should coordinate with other resources as needed.

For clarity, we could propose elevating a staff person who is currently part time to a full-time status, correct? In addition to perhaps hiring an additional staff person. Yes, this would be an appropriate demonstration of growing agency capacity to support this model.

What if we have a current staff member who would be perfect for the role but they're already work full time so we would post for a new Service Coordinator to fill that shift at the Shelter and "promote" to a Diversion Specialist? Yes, this would be an appropriate demonstration of growing agency capacity to support this model.

Does "forward rental assistance" include security deposit? I imagine the cap on # of months of assistance would depend on rental amount and the total household flexible fund cap? Security deposits are eligible under flexible financial assistance. Households can receive up to three (3) months of rental assistance. This is capped for the grant term (i.e. households can be assisted with rent payments more than once but cannot receive more than 3 months of rental assistance). This cap is implemented separately from the Flexible Financial Assistance. Shelter Diversion is not Eviction Diversion so rental assistance should not be utilized to pay back rent.

Related, current pilot participants are finding success in offering the initial first month plus security deposit and at the 30, 60 and 90 day follow ups offering additional rental assistance as needed. The goal of this is that we are moving households into SUSTAINABLE rental situations and maybe one month of rent is all a household needs to be able to continue rent payments on their own.

If we offer childcare assistance, would the childcare provider need to be a licensed childcare program or home? (rather than a "babysitter") Licensing is important but not necessarily prohibitive for assistance. MSHDA could support case conferencing to confirm when needed. We also recommend tapping into MDHHS Child Development and Care Assistance where available to support households needing assistance with childcare.

Can we apply to serve more than one county, multiple CoC/LPB areas?

Yes. MSHDA currently supports this set up in Greater Grand Traverse Area and are happy to connect organizations pursuing this as a part of the model. Related, we also have three projects that share responsibilities of diversion between organizations that specialize in serving specific populations, but they are providing services in one county.

Example: Washtenaw County's project has two organizations providing Diversion services. They co-refer as one serves families and the other serves single adults.

In both of these situations, there must be one primary fiduciary that administers the funds and submits Financial Status Reports. We encourage sharing of administrative dollars between organizations that are sharing diversion responsibilities.

We are interested to having our own IGX profile within the shelter. Is there help with achieving this profile from you?

Yes, MSHDA provides a broad range of technical assistance to on board new agencies to our grant management system, IGX. It is not recommended that a profile is initiated until the organization is notified of being in receipt of funding for this project.

What is the average case load?

The average caseload can vary for several reasons: seasons, community need and organizational capacity. The average case load for current pilots is reported anywhere between 10 active cases to 40.

Prior FAQ's

How can we utilize flexible financial assistance for hotels? Hotels can be an approved use of funding when the following conditions exist: The client has no other options but to enter shelter, the client has a housing voucher, and the client has a move in date and a signed lease. Hotelling should only be utilized when there is a positive and permanent exit destination. The average hotel stay, when applied in this way, is less than 1 week. Flexible Financial Assistance is not to be used for hotels as an alternative to entering shelter when there is not a positive and permanent exit destination.

We have utilized FFA for car repair to enable a client to get to a permanent and positive destination.

What about campers or RV's? Campers and RV's are a very specific and viable housing choice. FFA could be utilized for a repair when/if the habitability of the camper/RV is in question. If the client has been permanently utilizing their RV or camper as their residence, but it has become uninhabitable, the client must show proof of payment to a campground or other semi-permanent location for at least the last 30 days, they must be located on a site with the appropriate electric hookup for their RV or camper. The initial inspection and estimate must be facilitated by a technician with the appropriate certifications for RV repair. FFA cannot be utilized to purchase or rent a vehicle or RV/Camper. It may be beneficial to explore other housing alternatives with your client in lieu of utilizing their RV or camper as permanent housing.

If we enter into services with a business as a part of shelter diversion, are we required to submit any documentation? All organizations should have systems in place to ensure that the business that you are working with carry the appropriate certifications for the services sought, they should have a current LARA certificate. <https://cofs.lara.state.mi.us/SearchApi/Search/Search> MSHDA is not asking for proof of any of these items to be reimbursed for expenses, please consult with your organization for policy regarding engagement in services on behalf of clients.

Are deposits pulled out of rent assistance or Flexible Financial Assistance? Deposits will be billed against FFA.

Can we assist clients already in shelter? Yes, diversion should not be a barrier to entering shelter and we should try to integrate diversion into everyday conversations all across the CE process. “Always be Diverting.”

Can Fringe be included in diversion salaries? Yes, an employee’s fringe benefits are part of their overall salary and benefits.