

**Housing Assistance to Reduce Infant Mortality
Response to Questions
September 15, 2017**

- 1. The NOFA states non-profit organizations, public organizations and public housing authorities are eligible applicants, but the agreement (page 7 of the NOFA) states the tax-exempt status of this organization is still in effect. Can a public organization or public housing authority be the lead organization on an application?**

OHFA will allow a public organization or public housing authority to be the lead organization on an application.
- 2. Are there restrictions on billable supportive services?**

No. Applicants should provide justification for each proposed service. OHFA encourages applicants to work with partner agencies to fund supportive services instead of using OHFA funds.
- 3. Please clarify unallowable technical and training activities.**

Technical assistance and training are defined as activities that build the general capacity of an organization to support or implement organizational change. Ineligible technical assistance and training activities includes activities including, but not limited to, capacity building, consultation, and staff development.
- 4. Is a notice of intent required?**

No. A notice of intent is not required for this grant.
- 5. Is there an advancement of funds or is the grant reimbursement only?**

The State of Ohio prefers a reimbursement structure for all grants and contracts.
- 6. Can any portion of the funding be used for construction?**

No. Funding from this grant mechanism cannot be used for construction or development activities.
- 7. Has OHFA identified the amount of reporting requirements that will be required and that we should plan for administratively?**

Specific reporting requirements have not been developed for this grant program. OHFA anticipates grantee(s) will be required to communicate regularly with the OHFA grant manager and there will be, at a minimum, quarterly reporting requirements.

8. What are the expectations for the evaluation? How many reports are required? Quarterly, annually etc.?

A final report will be due at the conclusion of this grant. OHFA expects a detailed evaluation report to be developed by the grantee with significant input and content from the evaluation/research partner. Depending on the structure of the proposed program an interim report may be required.

9. Would a pilot project with a small set of participants but ones that are thoroughly engaged in receiving services and being evaluated be acceptable? If so, what would be considered a small set?

No. OHFA would like to maximize the number of participants funded with this grant mechanism. A small set of participants is unlikely to yield the type of evaluation that is required for this grant mechanism. Applicants must also include a detailed discussion about the sufficiency of the proposed sample size.

10. Is OHFA interested in a random assignment evaluation where some get the subsidy and others do not?

Yes. Applicants must include a discussion of how the proposed program would safeguard participants and non-participants and the grantee must obtain approval from an Institutional Review Board.

11. What data is OHFA prepared to provide to the awarded firm?

OHFA will not provide data for this grant program.

12. Can the evaluator be from outside of Ohio?

An evaluation partner from outside Ohio will be considered. The applicant must demonstrate how this partner provides a level of expertise not available within Ohio.

13. Are we disqualified from participating in the program if funds were used outside of the state of Ohio?

Payments of rental assistance must be made to only households residing in Ohio. Applicants may use other, non-OHFA sources of funding for households that live outside of Ohio, however, the focus of this pilot program is on households that include pregnant women, new mothers, or infants within the first year of life living in Ohio.

14. Are there any limits on evaluation costs?

Evaluation costs should not exceed 20% of the total project cost.

15. Do the communities eligible include the Ohio Equity Institute communities?

Yes. Priority will be given to proposals that include a partnership with Ohio Equity Institute partner communities located in Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark and Summit Counties.

16. There are no preferred partner counties that are located in Southeastern Ohio. If awards are made beyond the counties listed as Ohio Equity Institute partners, would there be any preference to given to projects serving this more rural area?

OHFA does not expect to make any awards to rural communities. Priority will be given to Ohio Equity Institute partner communities located in Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark and Summit Counties.

17. Given OHFA has \$1 million for this initiative, and the RFP gives priority to only designated urban areas, does OHFA anticipate the ability to funds projects outside of those urban areas?

No. OHFA does not expect to make any awards to rural communities. Priority will be given to Ohio Equity Institute partner communities located in Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark and Summit Counties.

18. Does funding requires the agency to be an active CHDO?

This funding does not require the applicant to be an active Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

19. What are the eligible activities that OHFA will fund through this NOFA?

OHFA will consider funding the following activities: rental assistance, supportive services, care coordination, case management, outreach and marketing, and evaluation. The majority of OHFA funds must be spent on rental assistance. Applicants are encouraged to partner with state and local entities to fund the outreach, social service, and health care-oriented activities.

OHFA will not fund expenses to cover meetings; food or beverages; hotels; travel; conference fees; fees not related to the funded project; construction and development costs; equipment; payments to project director, co-applicants, and/or collaborators as consulting fees or honoraria (in addition to his or her salary) and salary and costs of general administrative support staff.

20. Is this a two-year or three-year grant?

The grant period begins on January 1, 2018, and ends on December 31, 2020. Applicants should plan to complete the rental assistance and service

activities in a timely manner to allow for data collection and analysis of program outcomes. The entire project including administration of rental assistance, delivery of social service and health care activities, and the evaluation must be completed on or before the conclusion of the grant period (December 31, 2020). No extensions will be given to grantees. OHFA expects the grantee(s) to deliver the final report on or before December 31, 2020.

21. What is the total amount being awarded through this grant? Is it a \$1 million grant or are there multiple awards?

A total of \$1 million was allocated for this funding mechanism over the entire grant period. This is a one-time allocation of funds. OHFA anticipates approving one or two grant awards depending on the quality and scope of proposals. Each county will not receive an award, and the total amount awarded will not exceed \$1 million.

22. Are indirect costs allowed or must administrative costs be itemized? If no, is payment of these funds eligible for matching funds? Can additional administrative costs be covered out of the match?

Indirect or administrative costs are an allowable expense. However, administrative/indirect costs may not exceed 10% of the total direct costs. Additional administrative or indirect expenses cannot be included in the match. These expenses do not need to be itemized, however, additional information should be provided in the budget narrative.

23. Can OHFA define "cash match"?

A cash match is defined as federal, state (non-OHFA), local, or private contributions to the proposed program. For the purposes of this grant, services provided to rental assistance participants such as, but not limited to, Housing Choice Vouchers, project-based vouchers, care coordination, case management, social services or health care services provided through other entities will be considered cash matching funds. Additionally, cash donations from partner organizations are considered matching funds.

24. How should the cash and in-kind match be documented?

All matching funds must be documented and verifiable by OHFA staff. The cash match should be documented with a letter from the entity committing the funds or services (described in question 23) for this grant. The documentation must provide the amount of match, time period of the commitment, allowable activities funded with the match, and the specific date when funds will be available. For items included in the cash match that do not necessarily result in a direct payment to the lead organization, applicants should provide documentation as to the estimated amount (fair market value) of services to be provided, how priority will be given to clients

involved in this rental assistance pilot project, and a documented commitment by the organization to partner in this pilot program. OHFA will not consider a simple referral to a non-partnering agency or organization as documented proof of matching funds.

25. Under what conditions will OHFA allow in-kind match? What is the approximate percentage of the total match that can be in-kind?

OHFA will consider in-kind match on a case-by-case basis and in very limited circumstances. Therefore, an established percentage of the total match has not been determined. Applicants are encouraged to obtain a cash match to fund the service and health care components of this grant program. See question 23 for the definition of a cash match for this grant.

26. What are exclusions with matching funds?

There are few restrictions regarding the source of matching funds. However, exclusions include, but are not limited to, tenant payments for rent, office space, office equipment, furniture, or any donated goods, administrative and/or indirect costs.

27. If the awarded agency provides supportive services to clients under the program (i.e. case management, medical services, drug treatment, etc.), and the expenditures by the Agency are tracked by each client, are those costs considered as "cash match"?

Yes.

28. Do tenant rent payments count toward project match?

No. Tenant payments do not count toward project match.

29. If partner agencies who are providing services to the project receive cash funds outside of the grant, can this be used as cash match? (i.e. other grants, Medicaid, etc.)

Yes.

30. Can Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) be used towards the cash or in-kind match requirement?

Yes.

31. Can project-based vouchers (PBV) be used towards the cash or in-kind match requirement?

Yes.

32. Can grant funds from the Ohio Department of Medicaid be used towards the cash match requirement?

Yes.

33. Can other state or federal funding be used towards the cash match requirement, i.e. HUD rapid re-housing or HOME tenant-based rental assistance?

Yes.

34. What is the definition of experimental programmatic activity?

Experimental programmatic activity is broadly defined as activities that are not informed by the body of practice-relevant research. OHFA encourages applicants to pursue culturally appropriate evidence-based practices or programs.

35. What is the definition of ongoing operating support?

Ongoing operating support is defined as funding directed to an organization's operations as a whole rather than a particular project including funding to maintain day-to-day operations, administration, infrastructure, or overhead costs. Examples include, but are not limited to, providing salaries for key administrative staff, operating expenses (rent, phone, and office supplies), staff development, maintaining existing services. Salaries for a new project or program directly associated with this grant are an eligible expense.

36. For partnership proposals (where the lead entity will not be performing all required activities), how should the costs to be incurred by key partners for supportive services, rental assistance administration, maternal/child supports, etc. be recognized in the budget?

Depending on the structure of the proposed program these costs could be recognized as matching funds from other organizations if they are not being paid out of OHFA funds.

37. Are we able to budget for utilities, or should we give a utility allowance?

If the tenant pays utilities, a utility allowance should be applied. Applicants should use the local PHA utility allowance as a guide.

38. Is there expectation that tenants must contribute toward rent? If yes, does OHFA have specific expectations? Is there flexibility for applicants to design their own subsidy structure (e.g. income-based, fixed, graduated/declining subsidies, or bridge subsidies)?

OHFA's expectation is the tenant would pay based on the HUD Section 8 30% of income calculation. OHFA discourages applicants from proposing their own subsidy structure.

39. Are payments of participants' utilities and security deposits allowable expenses for OHFA funds? If no, is payment of these cost eligible for matching funds?

OHFA funds cannot be used to pay a participant's utilities or security deposits. However, these costs are eligible for matching funds.

40. Are payments of participants' rent and/or utility arrearages eligible for OHFA funds? If no, is payment of these cost eligible for matching funds?

OHFA funds cannot be used to pay for rent and/or utility arrearages, however, these costs are eligible for matching funds.

41. Can funds be used to pay for hotel/motel vouchers while participant is seeking housing? If yes, are there any restrictions? If no, is payment of these cost eligible for matching funds?

OHFA funds cannot be used to pay for hotel/motel vouchers while the participant is seeking housing, however, these costs are eligible for matching funds.

42. Can funds be used to pay for moving costs and/or initial furnishings? If yes, are there any restrictions? If no, is payment of these cost eligible for matching funds?

OHFA funding may not be used to pay for moving costs or furnishings, however, this cost may be included as part of the matching funds.

43. Must the match be a rental subsidy/support match, or can it include funds for service coordination/delivery, operating expenses, and/or a set-aside of vouchers, or other types of housing-related funds?

The match may include funds for service coordination and delivery or a set-aside of vouchers. The match may not include general operating expenses.

44. Are rapid re-housing resources an eligible sources of a cash match?

Yes.

45. Are CoC, Medicaid, or Early Head Start grants an eligible source of a cash match?

Yes.

46. Is office space and eligible source of cash match?

No.

47. Does the target population include households with infants in the first year of life housed with guardians, such as grandparents? Are the guardians required to verify guardianship?

Target households may include guardians such as grandparents raising grandchildren within the first year of life. Non-custodial children may not be counted as a household member for income eligibility purposes. Applicants should address how the rental assistance for households with non-custodial children would be handled should the infant leave the household. It is not necessary to obtain documentation of the guardianship.

48. Will pilot programs funded under this grant be measured based on HUD performance standards?

No.

49. Will pilot programs funded under this grant be subject to HUD standards (e.g. habitability, fair market rents, etc.)?

HUD standards are not necessarily required, however, applicants must address these issues in the proposal. Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed program would provide cost effective housing while ensuring households have safe, decent, affordable housing.

50. Is a CoC certification required? And if so, in what form?

Applicants are encouraged to work with the local Continuum of Care. A certification is not required.

51. What is considered an Ohio Equity Institute partner community organization?

An Ohio Equity Institute partner is any organization that is working within the local community infant mortality effort.

52. What percentage of the award must go to rental assistance?

No predefined limitation was determined by OHFA. However, applicants should keep in mind the primary purpose of this grant mechanism is to provide safe, affordable rental housing. The majority of OHFA funds should be allocated to rental assistance.

53. Will the assistance be available for postpartum clients at all? If so could it start postpartum without any pre-natal assistance?

Yes. Grant funding may be used for postpartum clients and does not necessarily have to include prenatal assistance. Applicants should note that assistance should not be given to a household with a child over a year old. Eligible households must have at least one child less than a year old.

54. What's the maximum amount of assistance per family and the intervals for assistance?

OHFA has not established a maximum amount of assistance or intervals for assistance.

55. Would utilities or other housing related expenses be included?

OHFA funds should be used for rent. Utilities or other housing-related expenses cannot be paid for using OHFA funds, however, these expenses could be paid for through other project partners.

56. Who could make referrals for the assistance? Are there any restrictions to this?

There are no restrictions as to who can make referrals for assistance. Applicants are encouraged to propose a robust outreach and marketing structure that would maximize the number of referrals and the use of this rental assistance.

57. Is there a goal for the number of families to be served by the project?

OHFA would like to maximize the number of units funded with this grant mechanism. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that aggressively target eligible households. Applicants should also consider the number of participants needed to complete a robust evaluation of the program.