

OKC HOPWA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The HOPWA Program is funded through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grant provides states with resources and incentives for meeting the emergency and temporary, short-term housing needs of persons with HIV and AIDS. The HOPWA Program focuses on maintaining individuals in their own homes, or if already homeless, shifting persons back to a more permanent living situation.

REGULATIONS/GUIDELINES

HOPWA Regulations: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/aidshousing/lawsregs/regs/index.cfm>
24 CFR Part 574

Client Eligibility

The HOPWA case manager determines an applicant's eligibility for the HOPWA Program. An eligible person for the HOPWA Program is a person with HIV/AIDS (and the person's family) who meets the following eligibility requirements:

- must be enrolled through a HOPWA case manager;
- must have an HIV positive antibody test;
- must have a documented income that does not exceed 50% of the median income for the area; and
- must have a documented HIV-related need for housing financial assistance

HIV-related need means the client must have an HIV condition that has a negative impact on their income and expenses to the extent that they cannot currently afford housing. The housing need must be directly related to the client's HIV infection. The HOPWA Program is a need and eligibility based program. A client's HIV+ status alone is not the sole criteria in determining the client's eligibility for assistance. HOPWA case managers will do a housing assessment and use other referrals sources for clients who do not have a documented HIV related need.

Examples of HIV-related need.

- The applicant is unable to pay rent, mortgage, utilities, etc., due to their HIV status at the time assistance is requested; such as (1) the client is unable to work due to hospitalization and, therefore, received significantly less pay and unable to cover expenses; (2) the client had to purchase unexpected costly HIV medications out of pocket; (3) the client was not hospitalized but too ill to work according to a physician's statement, and the client did not have a salaried position where sick and annual leave was accrued.
- The applicant is requesting assistance in an effort to move to more affordable housing to better accommodate their diminished income which has decreased because of their HIV status. For instance, the client is forced to work fewer hours due to fatigue/illness and is only receiving Social Security Income.
- The applicant had unexpected, unbudgeted medical expenses that must be paid.

Examples of Non HIV-related need:

- The applicant used their limited income to make vehicle payments and frequent repairs, to cover costs of maintaining pets, making excessive long distance telephone calls, purchasing Christmas presents, illegal drugs and alcohol, frivolous items, paying traffic citations, court or probation costs, etc., expecting HOPWA to pay housing costs.

Housing Plan

The Housing Plan is a written assessment with the primary goal of assisting the client to achieve independence from HOPWA and live within their financial means. The plan of care is developed by the HOPWA case manager and the client together to determine the need for housing assistance, the type of housing assistance, and what will happen at the end of the HOPWA time-limited assistance being provided. The plan should be simple and clear statements which include the time limited goals of the client in securing stable and permanent housing independent of continued HOPWA assistance.

Services

The HOPWA Case Management Service is the HOPWA Program. All HOPWA clients are eligible for HOPWA Housing Case Management services. The client may or may not be eligible for HOPWA financial rental assistance. The HOPWA case manager will help the client understand available housing resources and develop and follow their comprehensive housing plan with connections to other support. The plan will identify the household's ongoing housing stability needs and likely options for providing related assistance, including the use of other housing programs and mainstream health and human welfare programs. To include but not limited to development of a budget, referrals for social service or medical case management, legal, employment, food, and funds can be used for emergency and temporary rent, mortgage and utility payments to transition eligible persons into more permanent housing arrangements. *(If a HOPWA client uses STRMU funding services for 21 weeks each year or has used TBRA services for years. The HOPWA program has not done its job).*

Housing Information and Inspection Services: Clients are referred to Urban Housing Locators Inc. for information and referral services to assist eligible persons with locating, and acquiring housing. Many clients benefit from relocating to a lower rent and/or all bills paid housing. Housing inspections insure all units meet HUD's habitability standards.

HOPWA Employment Education Services: These services can be accessed through Guiding Right Inc. Clients does not have to be receiving HOPWA housing services to receive employment education services.

Emergency Housing: to provide temporary shelter (max of 60 days)

Permanent Housing Placement: Expenditures that help establish a household in a housing unit, including (but not limited to) application fees, related credit checks, and reasonable security deposits necessary to move persons into permanent housing, provided such deposits do not exceed two months of rent and are designated to be returned to the program. (one lifetime assistance)

Short-Term Rent/Mortgage and Utility (STRMU) payments to enable eligible individuals to remain in their own dwelling. HOPWA funds are provided to prevent homelessness and assist those clients who have an HIV-related need. Although a client who meets the income criteria and is symptomatic, acutely ill or disabled by HIV/AIDS may be eligible for the maximum allowable assistance, HOPWA benefits should not automatically be provided for the maximum 21-week period to all persons eligible for assistance. Each request for assistance should be reviewed monthly to determine eligibility based on financial and HIV related need. (based on clients need to a max of 21 weeks in 52 weeks).

Tenant Based Rental Assistance: The purpose of this program is to assist income-eligible individuals or families with an HIV-related need with their rent, until they are able to secure Section 8 vouchers or other affordable stable housing. HIV-related need means the client must have an HIV condition that has a negative impact on their income and expenses to the extent that they cannot currently afford housing. Failure to accept an offer of Section 8 housing will result in termination of HOPWA assistance. Most Tenant Based Rental Assistance clients will be certified for 3 months and reviewed for progress to meet goals of the client in securing stable and permanent housing independent of continued HOPWA assistance. Each person receiving TBRA under this program must pay a portion of the rent, including utilities. Each HOPWA client must pay the *higher* of: • 30 percent of the family's monthly-adjusted income (adjustment factors include medical expenses, size of family and child care expenses etc.) • 10 percent of the family's monthly gross income

OKC EMSA HOPWA Service Partners

Serving Canadian, Cleveland, Grady, Logan, Lincoln, McClain and Oklahoma counties.

Guiding Right Inc.

**7901 NE 10th
Midwest City, OK
405-733-0881**

Other Options Inc.

**3003 N. May Ave
OKC, OK
405-605-8020**

Latino Community Development Agency

**420 S.W. 10th
OKC, OK
405-236-0538**

Employment Services

**Guiding Right Inc.
7901 NE 10th
Midwest City, OK**

Email any questions to hopwa@sbcgobl.net