

Weekly CAFTH/City of Memphis Updates Call Notes

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May 5th, 2020

April 16th, 2020

April 7th, 2020

March 31st, 2020

May 5th, 2020

Note: No call was held today, but here are some notes for providers to be aware of per the last HUD Office Hours Call:

- Currently CoC/ESG funding cannot be used for purchasing PPE for clients.
- A notice will be coming soon for specific funding requirements for ESG-CV funding provided through the CARES Act. This notice will have more information about if/how funding can be used for food, bus passes, child care, and more.
- CoC program funds can be used for paying arrears for unpaid utilities, but not for the late fees associated with those arrears. Programs are encouraged to look for additional funding sources that can be used to pay those, and/or trying to work with utility companies to see if those fees can be waived during this pandemic.
- The emphasis for CoCs is still on COVID-19, and no official news on the CoC Competition has been released yet.

April 16th, 2020

Updates from CAFTH

Kelly Forstbauer gave updates from the recent HUD SNAPs office hours call that was specifically for reviewing the mega waivers. The following updates were highlighted:

- HUD emphasised continually that for any agency using a waiver, documentation is needed to show why the waiver was needed and should be kept in the client's file. For example, if an inspection had to be completed virtually, the case manager should document with pictures/screenshots of the video in the physical client folder, save the electronic files, and should document in the client file why the inspection could not be completed in person i.e. stay at home order in place. This is needed so that in the future when HUD completes an audit there is proper documentation that not only a waiver was requested, but why the waiver was needed.

- When a waiver request is emailed to the HUD field office, agencies must wait 48 hours from when the email was sent/2 calendar days before use, but don't need to wait for any response from HUD staff before implementing. HUD also reviewed multiple times that each individual agency must submit the waivers they want to use, and that the CoC/Collaborative Applicant cannot submit waivers for the CoC as a whole.
- Re-inspections of units are waived for one year from March 31st and a note must be placed in the client's folder explaining why the re-inspection could not be performed. Lead based paint unit inspections should be prioritized for re-inspection once the waiver period ends.
- Case meetings with clients completed virtually/over the phone do not need to have a waiver submitted because virtual case management has always been allowed. Waiver does give flexibility to reduce case management for 2 months but it is *not encouraged* and you would have to very clearly demonstrate why you couldn't meet with clients due to diminished staffing capacity, etc.
- If a program wants to move more than 10% of funds from one budget line to another, you still have to complete a grant amendment, but HUD is working on an expedited process with field offices since in the past this has been a lengthy process. Please email the Knoxville field office if you would like to amend your grant.
- For APRs that are due during this time, agencies are still expected to complete and communicate with CAFTH staff. If you can't complete an APR currently, you need to reach out to the field office to request an extension. The field office can approve or deny the extension, and if you do get an extension please email notification of the extension to Kelly Forstbauer (kelly@cafth.org) so we can track internally what APRs are extended and which ones still need to be submitted on time.
- Norm with the HUD SNAPs office stated they would not be dropping a NOFA in the next few weeks, but still nothing final about if there will or will not be a NOFA this year. Emphasis is still on COVID-19 response efforts over NOFA preparations for CoCs.

Updates from HCD/City of Memphis

Kimberly Mitchell updated the group that the hotels for sheltering persons experiencing homeless who are at a higher risk are going well and are currently at capacity. Kimberly reviewed the funding that will be coming down with the CARES Act for homeless programs and emergency sheltering efforts, and stated that the HCD director is looking to have a call with agencies interested in applying for the three main types of funding: HOPWA, CDBG, and ESG. Kimberly stated more information will be sent out soon for these calls, which will most likely

happen on Monday, April 20th. Emily Connell with the VA asked about the waiting list process for the hotels and if there is a prioritization process, and Kimberly Mitchell explained currently there is a waitlist and that the hotels are on a first come first served basis. Chere Bradshaw with CAFTH informed the group that there is potentially more funding coming down the line from TEMA, and additional updates will be coming soon.

April 7th, 2020

Updates from CAFTH

Kellie Cole shared some clarifying updates from HUD that have come since they released the mega waivers and hosted another office hours call:

- CAFTH sent out an email last week with a link to the mega waivers that HUD released along with a breakdown of the types of waivers available for use. If your agency wants to utilize any of the waivers provided in the memorandum, you must notify the Knoxville CPD Director, by email, of their intent to utilize a specific waiver flexibility **two calendar days before they anticipate using the waiver flexibility**. The email can be found in the HUD notice and here: CPD_COVID-19WaiverKN@HUD.gov
- CoC inspections **do** require a visual/virtual HQS inspection if this is a new unit. Previous guidance was that it did not have to be done until after the crisis was over, but HUD has clarified that it **does need** to occur for brand new units not previously used for leasing. ESG already had flexibility around habitability requirements, so no need to waive physical inspections.
- Crisis/extra pay policies & procedures can be implemented and then paid using CoC/ESG funds—but must apply across agency, not just grant-funded positions.
- For CoC grant agreements, Tier 1 renewal grants should be available to execute now.
- Regarding VODs and the new VOD waiver, staff don't have to get formal VOD document and instead case managers/intake can document a visible disability if waiver was requested before use. This also means you don't have to get a new VOD when the crisis has ended, and that this documentation is sufficient for PSH units.
- A resource that can be shared with Families navigating the remote school transition or who are in need of more educational resources can visit the “Wide Open School” website.
- DV advocates on the HUD Office Hours call emphasized that DV survivors are already under stress and experiencing trauma in normal circumstances, and programming/sheltering should focus on not re-traumatization. The 4 R's was a model presented that emphasized reassurance, routine, regulation, and relationships for

creating effective programming. Contingency planning was also highlighted for how to plan for if a parent is sick and there are children whose care needs to be coordinated.

- From Norm Suchar at the SNAPs office: “Many of you have asked about whether we can modify the 2020 CoC Competition given the incredible workload that CoCs, CoC-funded projects, and other stakeholders are under right now. We are looking at all the options. Unfortunately, we don't have anything to add to that right now, but we encourage you to continue to prioritize COVID-19 response.”

- **New items on the survey (Staffing)**
 - We are looking to assess agency staffing capacities during this time and make sure that staffing needs or issues can be addressed as best we can. The survey will look at total staff capacity, along with the impacts that COVID-19 has had on current staff capacity such as people that have tested positive and how this affects your agency's ability to provide services, etc.

Grant Ebbesmeyer updated the group on additional resources added to the CAFTH website, including guidance on wearing face masks and the inclusion of critical needs for agencies on the Agency Status Updates page.

Updates from HCD/City of Memphis

Kimberly Mitchell updated the group that Memphis will be receiving \$2 million in ESG dollars through the CARES Act, though the exact timeframe for when that money will be received is not currently known. For families that cannot access shelters because they are full, the City is coordinating referrals to the travel lodge for placements. Single women in need of shelter can be referred to the HUB who will coordinate placements with the Moxie Hotel. Single men are still currently being referred to the Memphis Union Mission, and a contingency plan is being worked on for how to space out beds in the MUM and refer men to other hotel options. A quarantine hotel/location for positive cases is still being coordinated through the public health department and nothing is finalized yet. Existing shelters are still working with the city. Currently there are no formal plans from the city for sheltering transgender individuals through these options, but Kimberly said the City would work on a plan.

March 31st, 2020

Updates from CAFTH

Kellie Cole shared the following updates from the HUD SNAP's office hours regarding some changes to general procedures for programs:

- First, the HUD Snap's office announced that waivers are coming that can be used for waiving some procedures such as grant admin requirements. We will follow-up with more information on what that will look like when those waivers are announced.
- The SNAP's office also gave some guidance on programmatic procedures that may be affected by the crisis and program staff being unable to connect in person with a client. It is strongly encouraged that program's create a COVID-19 policy on how inspections and other in-person procedures will be adjusted.
 - If a program needs signatures from a client for recertifications or leases, electronic signature can be used if a client has access to the electronic means to sign and send the document back. Otherwise, programs should document why the signature could not be gathered, document the verbal communication, and get the signature as soon as the crisis is over.
 - For inspections, the SNAPs office advised that renewal inspections may be delayed until this situation is over, and more guidance would be coming soon. If you need to complete an initial inspection, try to conduct the inspection via video and note why the inspection was done remotely. If you can't do an inspection via video, still house the client and document why the inspection was delayed. In both cases you must conduct an on-site inspection as soon as practicable. More guidance will be coming on these procedures.
 - For inspections where lead-based paint hazards are a concern (ie. pregnant woman or child under 6) it is strongly recommended to try to conduct the inspection via video. If this is not possible, note the reason in the file and that no other resources (ie. municipality) were available to conduct the inspection. Prioritize these inspections to be conducted first when the crisis abates.
- The SNAP's office also discussed the possibility that the CoC Competition will be cancelled for this year and programs would just receive the same funding into the next year. This is currently just a possibility the SNAPs office is considering, and nothing final has been announced. For now we will operate as if the CoC Competition is still going to occur, but we will update you all as soon as we hear anything more.
- CAFTH is working in collaboration with the City of Memphis on a protocol for what happens if someone has tested positive at your agency or shelter. We are also working out a detailed protocol for getting individuals tested who may not have transportation or nowhere to self-isolate if positive for COVID19. We are working on a flow chart right now and will continue to provide updates on what these procedures will be when they are developed. In the meantime, please let us know right away if you are struggling around getting an individual tested or if you know someone is positive and has stayed at your shelter.
- Please continue to provide updates in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday survey provider email, and feel free to send additional concerns or immediate issues to Chere Bradshaw (chere@cafth.org) and/or Kellie Cole (kellie@cafth.org)

Grant Ebbesmeyer reviewed the CAFTH website with everyone and highlighted the resources page that includes extensive resources on COVID-19 from various federal and state partners.

The CAFTH website also has a Agency Status Updates page that includes the current operational status of agencies.

Updates from HCD/City of Memphis

Kimberly Mitchell gave an update that the City will be coordinating the sheltering of families when the shelters are full in the Travel Lodge in Whitehaven. Kim discussed the funding coming through the CARES Act for ESG, and that \$4 billion will be released for the nation and the exact amount Memphis will receive is not fully known yet. This funding bill eliminates matching requirements, eliminates the cap on shelter funding, and does not have environmental review requirements.