



## State of Iowa

### Public Service Shelter Grant Program

### Questions and Answers.

*Following are answers to questions received regarding the Public Service Shelter Grant posted by IFA on June 12, 2009.*

Submitted by Tim Wilson,  
Willis Dady Emergency Shelter,  
Cedar Rapids 6-16-09

Q. We are looking to renovate our current space and expand so that we can provide more beds, including family units that are ADA compliant. We also are looking to add storage and children's spaces. Perhaps most significantly, we want to make it possible for our partner agencies to provide services on-site to Willis Dady clients as well as others in our community who are at-risk of becoming homeless. Currently we don't even have room for our case manager to meet privately with clients while I am here since we share an office.

We are addressing the "housing first" model by adding prevention through outreach that identifies and serves those in the neighborhood (and we are truly "in the 'hood; an area experiencing an upswing in violence) who are at-risk and also expand our case management to extend beyond clients' stay in the shelter. We hope to be able to access rental assistance resources and build relationships with landlords so that our clients will be seen as good investments as tenants. Toward that end, we have sought and anticipate approval of funding for a pilot rental assistance project. We have gathered data to make a strong case for the fact that there are many residents of our community who are indeed at-risk of homelessness.

Our facilities will include space of various sizes to accommodate 1-1 counseling, small groups and even classes, plus a job search center. We also hope to install a teaching kitchen wherein clients and community members can learn how to prepare inexpensive nutritious meals as an alternative to fast food and pre-mixed box meals. To determine the best size and configuration, we have been meeting with clients, service providers and community members. Their input is helping flesh out the particulars.

We have been working with an architectural firm that is providing services free of charge. They are experienced with green construction and projects of this scale and general purpose. As we own the adjacent property, we are in a good

position to expand without some of the costs and hassles that other shelters experience. The preliminary total cost estimates are for \$1.2 to \$1.7 million.

I have preliminary drawings but they are about to undergo significant revision based on the input we're gathering. Our board has been discussing renovation and expansion for a while. They are currently holding special meetings to adapt strategic planning to incorporate "housing first." They want to take advantage of opportunities presented by some additional funding being available at the state and federal levels as well as being an agency that has quickly and aggressively taken steps to embrace the new paradigm, hopefully making us an attractive candidate for both capital and operating support from funders looking for innovation and adaptability.

A. First off I need to clarify your terms. Is your facility an Emergency Shelter as defined in the allocation plan or a facility that would provide a longer stay like transitional housing? When we refer to emergency shelter in other programs we are usually talking about relatively short stays (usually 30 days or less). This legislation was very specific that it be used for new construction, renovations, or improvements of homeless shelters, emergency shelters, and family and domestic violence shelters.

As you can see in the allocation plan there are two categories of funding, new construction which can fund up to 50% of projects up to \$4 Million and renovations or improvements which can fund 100% of projects costs up to \$250,000 and 50% for amounts above that. It sounds like your project would include both categories.

It also sounds to me like you are planning to expand to include longer stays such as transitional housing which would not be eligible.

Space for the associated support services (case managers, storage and children's spaces) would be appropriate as long as the facility would fall into one of the four mentioned in the legislation. The grant could not be used for buildings or portions of a building planned to provide more than emergency shelter (that is to say, longer term residence). Renovations to achieve ADA compliance are eligible as are upgrades to improve energy efficiency.

In a multi-use building, such as a facility that provides both emergency shelter and transitional housing there would have to be clear descriptions of what part of the building project are for emergency shelter.

The main issue here is if the facility is first of all eligible. If it is the rest of what you describe as it pertains to the emergency shelter portion of the project would probably be eligible as well.

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*Submitted by* Kelly Thompson-Reyes  
Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc.  
Davenport, IA 6-16-09

Q. I do not see anything in the administrative rules or allocation plan about any requirements for obtaining bids and selecting contractors. I know there are some federal requirements for this, which I can look up - would they apply? And if so, could you direct me to them?

A. The allocation plan is silent on the issue of bidding procedures. The Public Service Shelter Grant is funded by the State of Iowa through the I-JOBS Program. There are no federal funds involved therefore the federal requirements do not apply. Depending on the applicant there are State competitive bidding requirements. If the applicant is a city or county government the Iowa Construction Bidding Procedures Act found in Chapter 26 of the Iowa Code would apply. If the applicant is a private non-profit there is no competitive bidding process required.

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*Submitted by* Keith Gatrost  
Four Oaks  
Independence, IA 6-16-09

Q. Four Oaks operates an emergency services shelter for adolescents out of rented space at MHI – Independence. As renters of State-owned space, are we eligible for dollars from the Public Service Shelter Grant? If so, would the application process require involvement from the owner (MHI Superintendent)? If not, could the owner apply for us?

A. In the allocation plan at 2.2.1 it states “Any entity that is eligible to apply for Emergency Shelter Grant funds under Chapter 24 Economic Development [261] IAC is eligible to apply for PSSG funds”. The list of eligible applicants in chapter 24 includes city governments, county governments and private non-profits. The property owner would have to be the applicant. Since the owner of the building in question is the State of Iowa the owner would not be eligible to apply.

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*Submitted by* Susan McGuire  
Center For Siouxland  
Sioux City, IA 6-16-09

Q. We are interested in applying for this grant in order to do some renovations at our transitional housing shelter. Are you going to hold a training session for this application?

We are wondering how many bids we are required to have for renovations. With the tight deadline, we need to contact contractors quickly in order to have enough time for them to come out and give us a bid

A. I would refer you to similar questions listed above.

The Public Service Shelter Grant is specifically for homeless shelters, emergency shelters, and family and domestic violence shelters. A transitional housing program would not be eligible.

We have not planned a training session for this grant due to the very short timeline.

If the applicant is a city or county government the Iowa Construction Bidding Procedures Act found in Chapter 26 of the Iowa Code would apply. If the applicant is a private non-profit there is no competitive bidding process required.

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*Submitted by* Ann Davidson  
YWCA  
Fort Dodge, IA 6-16-09

Q You may recall that last year the YWCA submitted a proposal to the Project Based Housing Trust Fund for new windows and renovation of 6 rooms to allow for larger living accommodations for women with 2 or more children. One of our difficulties is that most of the rooms at the YWCA are 10 x 12 or smaller, a tight squeeze for women with children. In reading the rules, there is a line that states that no more than one project will be funded at any one location. My question: Is it permissible to include several changes – i.e., new windows throughout the building with the room modifications – as a single project? Please clarify.

A You are referring to 3.3.3 of the allocation plan which states that “No more than one project shall be funded at any one facility or location”. As long as the facility or project is located at a single address it is considered one project. I believe the rooms you are referring to are all located in the same building so your project would be considered one location.

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*Submitted by* Amy Knudsen  
Children and Families of Iowa  
Des Moines, IA

Q We are looking at the needs at the DV shelter. Most of the work we were submitting for was exterior work. However, there are several areas interior that need attention (eg. Bathrooms). Is it ok to combine all rehab items into one application as long as the request is for a minimum of \$50,000?

A Interior and exterior renovations or improvements are eligible and should be submitted in a single application.

Q Can you clarify the purpose of the minority impact statement?

A The Minority Impact Statement is a new requirement passed by the State Legislature in 2008 and applies to all grant applications submitted to the State after January 1, 2009.

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*Submitted by* Rhonda Dean  
CAASA  
Spencer, IA 51301

Q We are going to tackle two kitchen remodels in our project plus some other littler projects. Can I include appliances for the shelter in the remodel bid?

A Appliances used in the kitchen such as refrigerators, freezers, stoves etc. are eligible expenses in the application and should be part of the bid.

Q Could we include some landscape improvements in the grant? Is that considered remodel?

A Landscaping to repair what was disturbed during the renovation is eligible as well as reasonable landscape improvements as part of the overall project grant.

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*Submitted by* Barb Puetz  
YWCA of Greater Des Moines  
Des Moines, IA

Q Since our common areas like kitchens and communal bathrooms are used by the people who stay in our emergency shelter rooms, could we use funds from this grant for these areas? An example would be making one bathroom on each floor handicap accessible. Currently our bathrooms cannot be considered handicap accessible.

A. Improvements to make bathrooms handicap accessible are eligible under the grant.

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*Submitted by* Ann Davidson  
YWCA of Fort Dodge, IA  
Fort Dodge, IA

Q About the matching funds for the Public Service Shelter Grant. Basically, I want to know if the matches can come from sources other than just dollars. For instance, property value, grants receivable for the year, volunteer hours, fund raising that may have been used as a match on other grants, donations of materials, etc.

A The match refers to the project cost for the construction, renovations, or improvements of the shelter. Grants received for other purposes could not be used as match for the project. For eligible projects we can pay up to 50% of the construction costs or 100% of the renovation or improvement cost up to \$250,000. If you have donated labor or materials you will have to clearly document the value of such items and include them in the project budget. Property value is not eligible as match since acquisition is not an eligible project cost as stated in 2.4 of the Allocation Plan.

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Submitted by Lee Ann Waltzing  
City of Belmond  
Belmond, Iowa

Q Can this grant program be used to construct an emergency shelter from a disaster, i.e. a shelter for people who have no basement with a tornado watch/warning being activated?

A The short answer is no. This grant is specifically for construction, renovations, or improvements of homeless shelters, emergency shelters, and family and domestic violence shelters as defined in the allocation plan.

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Submitted by Chance Kness,  
Clinton County Emergency Management Agency  
Clinton, IA

Q For the Public Service Shelter Grant, does the description of Emergency Shelter for these purposes include areas designated for use in disaster situations for temporary sheltering of those effected, for a short period from an hour to a few weeks? Also, does renovations or improvements include the addition of a generator in order to heat/cool/ and power a shelter?

A I have received similar questions regarding buildings used for disaster relief during floods or other emergencies. Let me refer to the allocation plan which describes eligible applicants under 2.2.1 as any entity that is eligible to apply for Emergency Shelter Grant funds under Chapter 24 Economic Development [261] IAC is eligible to apply for PSSG funds. Eligible applicants are described as follows:

**261—24.3(PL100-628) Eligible applicants.** City governments, county governments, and private, nonprofit organizations are eligible applicants under the emergency shelter grants program. City or county governments may apply on behalf of a service provider within their jurisdictions when the nonprofit organization serves homeless and near homeless clients by providing overnight shelter, meals, clothing, transportation, counseling, child care, legal services, medical services, transitional housing services, and other services eligible under the emergency shelter grants program as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The intent here is that the primary purpose of the facility is to provide services to homeless or near homeless persons as defined by HUD. Buildings used temporarily for disaster relief would probably not be eligible under this grant.

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Submitted by Bridget Bartlett, MSW  
Teresa Shelter  
Dubuque, IA

Q. We thought about extending our stays for guests who need longer term care (In other words: Semi-Transitional). If we were to apply for this grant would longer term stays effect our chances of getting the grant? And if so, would we be able to extend guests' stays in the future, or will we always have to remain emergency?

A. You would be eligible as long as you meet the eligibility requirements at the time of application. If you extend your stays at some time in the future but still provide emergency shelter for homeless persons that should not violate the Retention Period listed in the Allocation Plan at 3.4

Q. What is the Iowa Great Places Agreement?

A. You can learn about the Iowa Great Places program at:  
<http://www.iowagreatplaces.gov/content/view/27/57/>

Q. Under Exhibit #2, how do you show that the applicant demonstrates administrative capacity?

A. Here are a few examples. Explain how your organization has experience in administering State or Federal grants. Explain how you have the capacity to complete the project you propose. What experience does the project manager have in managing and completing projects such as this and what system of accounting and reporting do you have in place.

Q. Under Exhibit #4 what are some other examples that we can show need for the activity in the community? Can we show it by the census data that we currently have?

A. In addition to the examples listed in the application you could seek letters from the City, the Local Continuum of Care or other organizations that indicate the need for the shelter and the service it provides to the community.

Q. Under Attachment #3: The Minority Impact Statement; could you give specific examples for the negative impact expected? Could you also explain "evidence of consultation with representatives of the minority groups impacted" under that same attachment? I wasn't sure what that meant.

A. I can suggest that groups in the community that represent specific minority groups (NAACP, LaRaza, etc) could be consulted. I can direct you to the legislation passed by the Iowa Legislature that created the requirement. I have no further guidance beyond that. Here is the link:

<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&ga=82&hbill=HF2393>

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Submitted by Rachel Riley Smock  
Muscatine DV Shelter  
Muscatine, IA

Q. The Muscatine Domestic Violence Shelter of Family Resources Inc., actually leases the Shelter from the Muscatine Welfare associatin a non profit entity. Thus do we submit application, does the Welfare Association as the owner of the building have to be the applicant? Or should we do a joint application?

A. I would recommend a joint application as the property owner will have to be involved. There is a 5 year retention period and when a contract is issued the property owner will be asked to sign a retention and recapture agreement as noted in Allocation Plan at 3.4. while the proforma (Attachment #2 of the application) would be based on the shelter operations.

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Submitted by Dawn Habhab, Crittenton Center, Sioux City, IA 7-1-09

Q Crittenton is interested in getting the youth shelter off the grid. We are wondering if the costs related to wind turbine and solar water heating could be included in our proposal.

A Section 1.5 of the allocation plan describes Renovations or Improvements. The definition includes improvements to increase the efficient use of energy in buildings so converting to wind or solar would be considered increasing the efficient use of energy.

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***If new questions are received this Q&A will be updated on 7-2-09***