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OWF/PRC GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 41

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services
Directors, County Public Children Services Agencies
Directors, Child Support Enforcement Agencies

FROM: Tom Hayes, Director

SUBJECT: **TANF HOUSING PROGRAM BUDGET INITIATIVE**

The purpose of this document is to provide the County Departments of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) agencies with guidance on implementing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Housing Program budget initiative.

The TANF Housing Program (THP) was established by the 124th General Assembly in Amended Sub. H.B. 299. The legislative provisions include:

- Total appropriations of \$11,700,000 in the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2002 and SFY 2003 biennium.
- Authorization for the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) to administer the TANF Housing Program through an interagency agreement with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.
- Specification that the TANF Housing Program will provide “non-assistance” benefits and services to TANF eligible individuals under a Title IV-A program pursuant to the requirements of Section 5101.801 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- Specification that the TANF Housing Program is to provide the following benefits and services:
 - < Supportive services for low-income families related to housing or homelessness, including housing counseling;
 - < Grants to non-profit organizations to assist TANF-eligible families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines with down payment assistance for home ownership or down payment assistance to purchase a mobile home;

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- < Emergency home repair funding for TANF-eligible families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines;
- < Operating support for family emergency shelter programs; and
- < Emergency rent and mortgage assistance for TANF-eligible families with incomes at or below 200 per cent federal poverty level.
- Requirements that the ODOD's TANF Housing Program grantees work with the CDJFS to prevent duplication of housing services provisions.

NON-ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENT

In accordance with ORC 5101.801, the TANF Housing Program shall provide benefits and services that are not "assistance" as defined in 45 CFR 260.3(a) and are benefits and services that 45 CFR 260.31(b) excludes from the definition of assistance. See OWF/PRC Guidance Letter No. 13 for further discussion of "non-assistance".

PROGRAM DESIGN

ODOD plans to administer the TANF Housing Program through the expansion of two of its existing programs - Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Programs.

TANF/Ohio Housing Trust Fund Program

The OHTF is a Request for Proposal (RFP) program which promotes affordable housing opportunities, expands housing services and improves housing conditions for low-income families and individuals. Funds are provided to eligible non-profit organizations (such as housing development, homeless services, and social service agencies), units of local government (municipalities, counties and townships), public housing authorities, and consortia of any eligible applicants. OHTF funds are used for homeless prevention, supportive services, emergency rent and utility payments, emergency home repair, handicapped accessibility, home buyer counseling/down payment assistance, and operating subsidies for projects that meet the housing needs of low-income families and individuals.

The TANF/OHTF Program provides the following housing benefits and services:

- < Supportive services for low-income families related to housing or homelessness, including housing counseling;
- < Grants to non-profit organizations to assist TANF-eligible families with down payment assistance for home ownership or down payment assistance to purchase of a mobile home;
- < Emergency home repair;

- < Operating support for family emergency shelter programs; and
- < Emergency rent and mortgage assistance for TANF-eligible families.

A request for RFPs was issued in August 2001 to parties interested in applying for the housing funds. The list of selected SFY 2002 TANF/OHTF grantees, by counties served, is contained in Appendix A. ODOD will be soliciting proposals for SFY 2003 TANF/OHTF Program in July 2002.

TANF/ Emergency Shelter Grant Program

The ESG program provides funding to eligible non-profit organizations and units of local government to renovate, rehabilitate, maintain, operate and staff emergency shelter facilities for the homeless and to provide essential services to the homeless.

The TANF funds will be used to fund the essential services for homeless families. Such services includes assessments, case management, goal setting, budgeting, permanent housing placement, job placement, and referrals for substance abuse, mental health, and legal assistance.

The administration of the TANF ESG program is the responsibility of the ODOD and the local grantees.

Appendix B contains a list of SFY 2002 ESP programs funded by TANF dollars.

THP PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

ODJFS Responsibilities:

- Provide TANF funds in support of the operation of the TANF Housing Program as appropriated by the 124th General Assembly.
- Provide initial and on-going guidance to ODOD on TANF requirements for determining eligibility for services, reporting, benefits and services, and use of funds.
- Provide technical assistance to the CDJFS to understand the verification procedures.
- Develop unique CRIS-E codes to report the TANF/OHTF Program's hard services and include this information in existing CRIS-E PRC reports (i.e., GRP282RA).

ODOD Responsibilities:

- Comply with the requirements of ORC 5101.801 (D) in the provision of services.
- Assure that eligibility for services provided by the TANF Housing Program grantees comply with the TANF eligibility requirements.
- Prevent duplication of housing assistance by the grantees by requiring the grantees to provide evidence of collaboration with the CDJFS to ensure that families applying for

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housing benefits and/or services meet the TANF eligibility and "non-assistance"

requirements.

- Assuring that any participant or potential participant for and/or recipient or former recipient of TANF Housing Program benefits or services are afforded an appeals process in accordance with ORC 5101.801(D)(1)(e).
- Agree that ODOD and grantees not to use any information, systems, or records made available from ODJFS or the CDJFS for any purpose other than to fulfill the obligations of the requirement to verify eligibility and to avoid duplication of housing assistance.

Local Responsibilities:

Housing Assistance Collaboration/Verification

HB 299 requires the TANF/OHTF grantees to collaborate with the CDJFS and other local agencies to avoid duplication in the provision of housing assistance to TANF-eligible families. The collaboration between the TANF/OHTF grantee and the CDJFS is needed to ensure that any TANF funds used to provide housing assistance for the family, whether issued by the grantee or the county, meet the definition of “non-assistance”. In order to do this, *each agency has to know what services they are providing for the family and for what purpose*. Of all the TANF/OHTF benefits and services, the down payment assistance, emergency rental/mortgage assistance, and emergency home repair assistance, if provided for over four months, could possibly meet the definition of “assistance” if they are meeting the family’s on-going, basic needs.

The process used to verify a TANF/OHTF applicant’s receipt of housing services is the discretion of the county and the grantee. Verification procedures will need to be determined by the counties in collaboration with the grantees. Regardless of the verification procedure, the approved TANF/OHTF applicants’ data (such as name, address, social security number, date of birth, race, sex, service requested and amount, date of issuance, and other members of the household) will need to be entered into CRIS-E by the CDJFS for tracking and reporting purposes.

A number of counties have expressed concern about the administrative cost of entering applicant data into CRIS-E. Times studies indicate that verification of applicants who are already known to CRIS-E will take approximately ten minutes of staff time. For applicants who are unknown to CRIS-E, time studies indicated that data entry may take twenty-five to thirty minutes. Counties may track staff time attributable to the data requirements of the TANF/OHTF and may charge the TANF/OHTF grantee for those administrative costs at the rate of \$20.00 per billable hour.

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Reporting

The TANF Housing Program’s “soft services” include supportive services related to housing or homelessness, including housing counseling will be reported monthly to ODJFS by ODOD.

Down payment assistance, rental assistance, and emergency housing repair are considered as “hard services” and will be reported to ODJFS by the CDJFS via the CRIS-E system. The codes are as follows: 27: TANF Housing Program - down payment assistance, 28: TANF Housing Program - emergency home repair, and 29: TANF Housing Program - emergency rent/mortgage. Please note that “hard services” and “soft services” are defined along with other TANF Housing Program-related definitions are included in Appendix C.

If you need further assistance regarding the TANF Housing Program please contact your Regional Account Manager.

TP:gi

cc: OJFSDA
PCSAO
Assistant Directors
OWD Deputy Director
Children & Families Deputy Director
TANF Fiscal/Policy Committee
Regional Account Managers
Deputy Account Managers
Technical Assistance Managers
Fiscal Supervisors
OWD Bureau Chiefs

**ATTACHMENT A
SFY 2002 TANF HOUSING PROGRAM GRANTEEES**

	<u>Organizations</u>	<u>Counties Served</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.	Ashtabula County CHDO, Inc.	Astabula	\$ 75,000

2.	Rural Action Development Corporation	Athens	116,000
3.	Tri-County (HAP) CAA	Athens, Hocking, Perry	116,000
4.	Salvation Army of Belmont County	Belmont	110,000
5.	Clermont Counseling Center	Clermont	40,000
6.	Salvation Army	Clermont	30,000
7.	CAA of Columbiana County	Columbiana	100,000
8.	Catholic Charities Services Corporation	Cuyahoga	110,000
9.	Cleveland Housing Network	Cuyahoga	90,000
10.	Cleveland Mediation Center	Cuyahoga	59,000
11.	Cleveland Tenants Organization	Cuyahoga	30,000
12.	Council on Economic Opportunities for Greater Cleveland	Cuyahoga	110,000
13.	EDEN, Inc.	Cuyahoga	250,000
14.	Lutheran Housing	Cuyahoga	20,000
15.	Salvation Army of Central Ohio	Delaware	60,000
16.	Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency	Fairfield	32,000
17.	Community Action Commission of Fayette County	Fayette	104,700
18.	Community Shelter Board	Franklin	250,000
19.	Family Violence Prevention Center of Greene County	Greene	110,000
20.	Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority	Greene	15,900
21.	Bethany House	Hamilton	240,000
22.	People Working Cooperatively	Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, Warren	150,000
23.	HHWP Community Action	Hancock, Hardin, Wyandot, Putnam	65,000
24.	Salvation Army of Lake County	Lake	110,000
25.	Ironton-Lawrence County Area Community Action Org,	Lawrence	150,000
26.	Walter Nord Community Mental Health Center	Lorain	102,000
27.	FOCUS	Lucas	125,000
28.	Interfaith Home Maintenance Service	Mahoning	150,000
29.	Daybreak	Montgomery	170,000
30.	Pickaway County Community Action Agency	Pickaway	45,000
31.	LEADS Community Action Agency	Licking	130,000
32.	Tri-County Community Action Agency	Champaign, Logan, Shelby	63,000
33.	Family and Community Services of Portage County	Portage	130,000
34.	M.R.M. Community Action Program	Richland, Morrow	60,000
35.	WSOS Community Act. Comm	Wood, Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky	60,000
36.	Community Services of Stark County	Stark	70,000
37.	Massillon Urban League	Stark	50,000
38.	H.M. Life Services	Summit	40,000
39.	Community Action Program Corporation	Washington, Morgan	40,000
40.	Community Action Agency	Wayne, Medina	90,000
41.	Steps at Liberty Center	Wayne	30,000
		TOTAL	\$3,900,000

APPENDIX B

SFY 2002 TANF FUNDED EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAMS

County	Agency	TANF Grant Amount
Butler	Mercer Franciscan Social Ministries, Inc (St. Raphael)	\$59,900
Cuyahoga	Salvation Army-Greater Cleveland Area Services (Zelma George)	\$84,400
Fairfield	Community Action Program Commission of the Lancaster-Fairfield County Area	\$42,000
Franklin	Catholic Social Services, Inc.	\$122,700
Franklin	Volunteers of America of Central Ohio, Inc. (Family Shelter)	\$128,300
Franklin	Salvation Army-Greater Columbus Area, The	\$44,700
Greene	American Red Cross, Green	\$124,000
Hamilton	Bethany House Services, Inc.	\$96,500
Jefferson	Urban Mission Ministries, Inc., The	\$60,600
Lucas	Toledo Community Service Center	\$128,300
Montgomery	American Red Cross, Montgomery	\$94,800
Summit	Salvation Army-Akron, The	\$53,800
	Total	\$1,040,000

APPENDIX C

TANF HOUSING PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

“ASSISTANCE”: Benefits including cash payment, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family’s ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses). It includes such benefits even when they are: (i) provided in the form of payments by a TANF agency, or other agency on its behalf, to individual recipients; and (ii) conditioned on participation in work experiences or community service (or any other work activity as defined in federal regulations). It also includes supportive services such as transportation and child care provided to families who are not employed..

“FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINE”: The official poverty guideline as revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, 95 Stat. 511, 42 U.S.C. 9902, as amended, for a family size equal to the size of the family of the person whose income is being determined.

“GRANTEE”: The non-profit or local government entity granted the THP funds by ODOD.

“HARD SERVICES”: TANF benefits having cash value that are provided to clients. These services are reported through CRIS-E at the time of service provision.

“MINOR CHILD”: Means either of the following: 1) an individual who has not attained age 18; 2) an individual who has not attained age 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.

“NON-ASSISTANCE”: Non-recurring, short-term benefits designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need and are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs. In certain instances, benefits can not extend beyond four months, e.g., transportation benefits for an unemployed individual, or housing assistance. Non-assistance extending beyond four months includes: work subsidies; work expenses; supportive services such as transportation provided to families who are employed; earned income tax credits; services such as counseling, case management, peer support, child care information and referral, job retention, job advancement, family planning services, and other employment-related services that do not provide income support.

“PARTICIPANT”: TANF-eligible families who have been accepted by the grantee to receive THP benefits and services.

“POTENTIAL APPLICANT”: TANF-eligible families who have applied for housing services through the THP grantee.

“PRC”: the Prevention, Retention, and Contingency program provides “non-assistance” benefits and services to need families and low-income working families who are in need of help with essential supports to move out of poverty and achieve self sufficiency.

“OWF”: Ohio Works First is Ohio’s statewide TANF program that provides time-limited cash

assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children.

“SOFT SERVICES”: TANF services which do not have cash value to the recipient (e.g., job training and education, after-school programs, etc.).

“TANF”: The federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program that provides cash assistance, and/or work opportunities and supportive services to families as authorized under the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

“TANF HOUSING PROGRAM BENEFITS AND SERVICES”: Non-assistance services which include supportive services for low-income families related to homelessness and housing, including housing counseling; down payment assistance for home ownership or towards the purchase of a mobile home; emergency home repair assistance; operating support for family emergency shelter programs; and emergency rent and mortgage assistance.

“TITLE IV-A FAMILY”: Includes a minor child living with (except for a “temporary absence”) a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian. A specified relative means the following individuals who are 18 or older and related by blood or adoption: grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, first cousins, first cousins once removed, stepparents, step siblings, spouses of the above. The definition also includes a pregnant woman but do not include children in foster care.