

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

Grantees eligible to receive funds under the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) are required to complete a substantial amendment to their Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan. This form sets forth the required format for this substantial amendment. A completed form is due to HUD within 60 days of the publication of the HUD HPRP notice.

To aid grantees in meeting this submission deadline, the HPRP Notice reduces the requirement for a 30-day public comment period to no less than 12 calendar days for this substantial amendment. With this exception, HPRP grantees are required to follow their Consolidated Plan's citizen participation process, including consultation with the Continuum of Care (CoC) in the appropriate jurisdiction(s). Grantees are also required to coordinate HPRP activities with the CoC's strategies for homeless prevention and ending homelessness. To maximize transparency, HUD strongly recommends that each grantee post its substantial amendment materials on the grantee's official website as the materials are developed.

A complete submission contains the following three documents:

- 1) A signed and dated SF-424,
- 2) A completed form HUD-40119 (this form), and
- 3) Signed and dated General Consolidated Plan and HPRP certifications.

For additional information regarding the HPRP program, visit the HUD Homelessness Resource Exchange (www.hudhre.info). This site will be regularly updated to include HPRP resources developed by HUD and its technical assistance providers.

The information collection requirements contained in this application have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520). This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Information is submitted in accordance with the regulatory authority contained in each program rule. The information will be used to rate applications, determine eligibility, and establish grant amounts.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 16 hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. This information is required to obtain benefits. To the extent that any information collected is of a confidential nature, there will be compliance with Privacy Act requirements. However, the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan does not request the submission of such information.

Warning: HUD will prosecute false claims and statements. Conviction may result in criminal and/or civil penalties. (18 U.S.C. 1001, 1010, 1012; 31 U.S.C. 3729, 3802)

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

A. General Information

Grantee Name	City of Buffalo New York
Name of Entity or Department Administering Funds	Office of Strategic Planning
HPRP Contact Person (person to answer questions about this amendment and HPRP)	Carla A Kosmerl
Title	Deputy Commissioner for Neighborhood Development
Address Line 1	Room 214, City Hall
Address Line 2	NA
City, State, Zip Code	Buffalo, New York 14202
Telephone	716-851-5654
Fax	716-851-5006
Email Address	ckosmerl@city-buffalo.com
Authorized Official (if different from Contact Person)	Mayor Byron W. Brown
Title	Mayor
Address Line 1	Room 201 City Hall
Address Line 2	N/A
City, State, Zip Code	Buffalo, New York, 14202
Telephone	716-851-5035
Fax	716-851-5006
Email Address	bbrown@city-buffalo.com
Web Address where this Form is Posted	http://www.city-buffalo.com/

Amount Grantee is Eligible to Receive*	\$6,594,081
Amount Grantee is Requesting	\$6,594,081

*Amounts are available at <http://www.hud.gov/recovery/homelesspreventrecov.xls>

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

B. Citizen Participation and Public Comment

1. Briefly describe how the grantee followed its citizen participation plan regarding this proposed substantial amendment (limit 250 words).

Response:

City of Buffalo staff began interacting with homeless service agencies at meetings of the Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) and the Western New York Coalition for the Homeless (WNYCH) when Congress was first discussing homeless prevention as part of the recovery act.

The City of Buffalo held two forums with over 60 participants from various homeless and housing services providers on April 9, 2009 and April 16, 2009 to seek their input and assistance in developing the plan. Homeless service providers, HOPWA agencies, representatives from Erie County, fair housing agencies, and neighborhood housing agencies all assisted in developing this plan.

A draft plan was developed after the two initial forums and presented at a formal public hearing on April 23, 2009 to introduce the draft and seek additional comment.

The result of the two forums and public hearing was presented at a May 6, 2009 public hearing.

It is expected that this plan will be a flexible plan that will be revised before implementation and after in order to adjust to consumer needs. Once the sub-grantees are selected they will then be charged with the task of amending the plan to provide a more detailed process that becomes a policies and procedures manual.

2. Provide the appropriate response regarding this substantial amendment by checking one of the following options:

- Grantee did not receive public comments.
- Grantee received and accepted all public comments.
- Grantee received public comments and did not accept one or more of the comments.

3. Provide a summary of the public comments regarding this substantial amendment. Include a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons for non-acceptance.

Response:

**Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the
Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)**

Summary of Comments

Comments received at the first public hearing at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center on April 23, 2009:

Douglas Frank - Executive Director Central Referral Services

Data based for those who are at risk for homelessness to be used by professionals and community should be developed that would identify homeless services and services that are critical to their well-being.

A web site should be created so clients and service providers.

Encourage people early on to seek assistance

Issue of people forgetting papers needed suggest we call them a days ahead of time.

He also provided a list of services Central Referral Services could provide.

His written comments are enclosed in the application package.

Karen Nicholson - Executive Director Legal Services for Elderly

Endorsed the overall structure of the plan.

The plan should address legal services for tax foreclosure and housing code violations.

Endorses the Continuous Case Management model

Her written comments are enclosed in the application package.

David Schopp – Executive Director Legal Aide Bureau

Also believes the plan should address homeowners in Buffalo's Housing Court for code violations, and tax foreclosures.

Bill Hawkes – Executive Director Neighborhood Legal Services

Neighborhood Legal Services provides eviction prevention assistance.

Neighborhood Legal Services has expertise in benefits analysis.

Also provide training in public benefit training.

A lot of info on their web site so community advocates can use as referral.

**Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the
Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)**

Benefit analysis should be separate from the Central Finance Agency.

Bob Ellardo - Managing Attorney Erie County Volunteer Lawyer Project

It is generally a good plan.

Likes flexibility and legal services for eviction.

Project is at City Court 3 days/week.

Prevention is more cost effective.

Stabilization and prevention should be emphasized.

Continuous Case Management is a good idea.

Tax Foreclosure legal services should be included.

His written comments are enclosed in the application package.

Karen Carmen - Case Manager Matt Urban Center

The roles of the Case Managers and Housing Case Managers should be better defined.

Suggested that the budget focus less on hiring people and more on rental funds.

More money should be directed to Rapid Re-Housing.

Her written comments are enclosed in the application package.

Bill O'Connell – Executive Director Homeless Alliance

The City did a good job bringing people together.

Urges City to be in specific in RFP process and to separate RFP's for each area.

Being more specific keeps politics out of the decisions.

Get experts who are already doing this work

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

Brian Brown Cashdollar - Executive Director Vive

Refugees don't fit in the chart presented.

Refugees account for 5,000 people per year.

Andrea Boyd - Group Ministries

Information should be provided that is culturally compatible.

Summary of written comments received:

Scott Gehl - Executive Director HOME

The \$400 estimated for monthly rent is low.

The program may have to offer 3 months of rental assistance to entice landlords to rent to formerly homeless tenants.

The role of the Housing Case Managers needs to be clear and where they are assigned.

Email is enclosed as part of the application package

Mary Ellen Brockmyre - Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled

There is a need for specialized case management for developmentally disabled clients.

Email is enclosed as part of the application package.

Deanne Montgomery - Crisis Services

Had several points that needed to be clarified in our plan.

Email is enclosed as part of the application package

General Comments Received

Overall, the comments regarding the plan have been positive. Agencies are pleased to be part of the planning process with some being energized by the process. People have commented that it is wonderful to have the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, County of Erie, Town of Tonawanda and the City of Buffalo collaborating the program.

The most asked questions have been on the details of the process for potential clients. The plan attempts to explain that the details are yet to be worked out. Once the City reviews the proposals we will assemble a "team" that will work on the details of a process and have

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

written policies and procedures. Even after all of the planning and detail work is done, there will undoubtedly be cases that require a review of the procedures that are first implemented. Planning and implementation of the program will be an ongoing, continuous process.

Summary of Responses to Comments

Douglas Frank's comments regarding the need for a central data base and web site were incorporated into our preliminary plan. Other points were either specific services Central Referral Services could provide or were details for later in the planning process and were not included.

The comments from Karen Nicholson, David Schopp and Bob Ellardo regarding the need for possibly providing legal services for tax foreclosures was included in the plan pending further clarification from HUD. Possibly providing legal services for homeowners facing housing code violations doesn't seem to fit the program requirements and were not included but further clarification of the regulations will be sought.

Bill Hawkes comments regarding separating the benefit analysis from the Central Finance Agency were accounted for in the plan.

The comments from Karen Carmen and Scott Gehl to clarify the roles of the Housing Case Managers were accounted for in the plan. Further clarification will take place as the policies and procedures are developed.

As per Bill O'Connell's comments, the City will attempt to be as clear as possible in our Request for Proposals while still leaving some room for creative proposals.

Brian Brown Cashdollar's comments regarding refugees is being considered and will be further discussed when the policies and procedures are further developed.

The comments of Andrea Boyd were incorporated as part of the City's preliminary plan.

Scott Gehl's comments regarding the possible need for 3 months rental assistance for some clients was incorporated into the City's preliminary plan. The concern of the \$400 figure being too low is just an estimate at this point for budgeting purposes only.

Mary Ellen Brockmyre's comment on the need for specialized assistance for those with developmental disabilities was accounted for in the city's preliminary plan.

Some of Deanne Montgomery's points on clarifying the city's preliminary plan were incorporated. Other comments were left for the policies and procedures to be developed at a later date.

C. Distribution and Administration of Funds

Reminder: The HPRP grant will be made by means of a grant agreement executed by HUD and the grantee. The three-year deadline to expend funds begins when HUD signs the grant

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

agreement. Grantees should ensure that sufficient planning is in place to begin to expend funds shortly after grant agreement.

1. Check the process(es) that the grantee plans to use to select subgrantees. Note that a subgrantee is defined as the organization to which the grantee provides HPRP funds.

Competitive Process

Formula Allocation

Other (Specify: Request for Proposals will be sought)

2. Briefly describe the process(es) indicated in question 1 above (limit 250 words).

Response:

The City of Buffalo will seek proposals for:

- Case Management Services
- Referral Agency
- Housing Location Assistance
- Central Finance Agency
- Legal Services
- Access to Funds

Part of the application will ask what other services does the agency currently provide that are fully funded that can be part of this program.

An independent committee will be formed to review the applications and make recommendations on funding. Previous committees that have reviewed Emergency Shelter Grant applications have included professionals from homeless service providers who are not part of the application process, Homeless Alliance of WNY and City representatives. We intend to use a similar process and are under discussions with the County of Erie and Town of Tonawanda to potentially share in the Request for Proposal process.

3. Briefly describe the process the grantee plans to use, once HUD signs the grant agreement, to allocate funds available to subgrantees by September 30, 2009, as required by the HPRP Notice (limit 250 words).

Response:

Applications for funding will be made available to agencies by early June 2009 with their completed applications due in mid June 2009. The selection committee will make their recommendations and present them to the Mayor for final approval by June 30, 2009.

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

Approvals from the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and Common Council will be sought before July 31, 2009. Once approved, staff will have two months to get successful agencies under contract to begin this program by September 30, 2009.

4. Describe the grantee's plan for ensuring the effective and timely use of HPRP grant funds on eligible activities, as outlined in the HPRP Notice. Include a description of how the grantee plans to oversee and monitor the administration and use of its own HPRP funds, as well as those used by its subgrantees (limit 500 words).

Response:

A full HPRP Preliminary Plan is enclosed as part of the application package. It is summarized below.

A consensus of opinion suggests that having one Central Financial Agency (CFA) to manage the rental payments would be the best model to utilize. This model is used by the Emergency Food and Shelter Board (FEMA funded) to distribute and coordinate activities and will also be used in this program. It is our intention to use the CFA to disperse client assistance funds, to collect data and to assist with HMIS. This will ensure a rapid response to client needs, allow for more accurate data, assist with reporting and avoid duplication of services. There would be a Project Monitor assigned to the CFA that would review all applications for funding to ensure all the required documentation has been submitted including income verification, intake forms and assessments are filled out correctly, referral to Housing Case Managers, etc. This will make monitoring more centralized and will ensure timely reporting.

The City of Buffalo will utilize existing homeless case managers in addition to those hired with HPRP fund to do the initial contact with those who are already homeless in shelters and on the streets. The case managers will be responsible for submitting a complete file to the central financial agency that will include all documentation on homelessness, income verification and other documents according to a file checklist. The case managers will work with housing counselors to identify housing that is safe, affordable and meets all HUD HQS and lead standards. Once appropriate housing is identified, the central financial agency will authorize funding for up to three months rent. If a client needs more than three months rent, they must present the individual circumstances to the Outreach Committee of the WNY Coalition for the Homeless for continued assistance every three months to coincide with the required recertification.

Prevention services will be accessed through the Erie County Department of Social Services and Buffalo Housing Court through the legal eviction process. One agency will be selected to do intake and phone referrals for other prevention clients. Those entering the system through housing court will have access to legal representation through the ESG and HPRP funds. Those entering the system through the intake agency will receive initial case management.

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

All clients entering the system will receive a benefits analysis to ensure they are accessing all mainstream benefits such as TANF, food stamps, unemployment, SSI, SSD, VA, etc. This step will help to ensure that clients are receiving other sources of income in order to help them achieve stable housing.

Housing search services will be needed to help develop a pool of available apartments, and conduct necessary inspections to comply with HQS and lead standards. It is our intention to utilize the Section 8 inspectors already trained by Belmont Shelter and the Rental Assistance Center. Reconstruction Analysts from current CDBG funded agencies will supplement the inspection process. Housing search assistance will be one of the proposed applications for services the City will seek.

D. Collaboration

1. Briefly describe how the grantee plans to collaborate with the local agencies that can serve similar target populations, which received funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 from other Federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Labor (limit 250 words).

Response:

The City of Buffalo will utilize neighborhood-housing agencies that we fund through the CDBG program as part of the housing location and landlord identification efforts. The Matt Urban Center also operates a weatherization program funded with state and federal funds. The Section 8 providers in Erie County, Belmont Shelter, Rental Assistance Center and the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority will also be consulted on the development of this list.

The City of Buffalo will also consult with the BMHA on the use of their capital funds and the availability of housing options for HPRP clients.

The City of Buffalo will provide of complete list of previously funded Low Income Housing Tax Credit, HOME, CDBG, HUD 202 and 811 rental projects that can be part of a potential rental-housing list that is Section 8 “friendly.”

Any funding for training and employment that is provided to the City of Buffalo and County of Erie will be funneled through the Buffalo Employment and Training Center (BETC). Any person identified through the HPRP process will be made aware of the services available to them through BETC. Poverty is the main cause of homelessness so this referral will be key to providing clients with the opportunity to end the cycle of homelessness.

The Benefits Analysis is designed to ensure that all public entitlements and public assistance are being utilized including unemployment, TANF, food stamps, food banks, WIC, Meals on Wheels, SSI, SSD, Veteran’s benefits, etc.

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

The Case Managers will refer clients to Community Health Centers for any medical or dental issues. They will also be able to refer clients to any HOPWA agencies if these services are necessary.

The Case Managers will also coordinate education efforts with the Buffalo Board of Education's homeless program. They will also ensure clients are aware of Head Start programs for childcare and education.

The Creating Assets Savings & Hope (CASH) program funded by the United Way will help clients become aware and assist in filing for Child Tax Credits, Earned Income Tax Credit and other income tax related issues. They also conduct financial education services for the Greater Buffalo area.

Current and future Emergency Shelter Grant and HOPWA agency budgets will be reviewed to maximize the use of HPRP funds.

2. Briefly describe how the grantee plans to collaborate with appropriate Continuum(s) of Care and mainstream resources regarding HPRP activities (limit 250 words).

Response:

The Homeless Alliance of WNY, the local Continuum of Care agency, has been consulted throughout the planning process and this plan is consistent with the goals of the Buffalo and Erie County 10-year Plan to End Homelessness (PRISM). The local FEMA program provider (American Red Cross) has also been consulted and has provided information that was used to model our Central Financial Agency. The County of Erie has participated in all of our planning sessions and may use the CFA model as part of their HPRP funds. The City and County are discussing the use of the same agency and collaborating on the selection of the CFA. The Town of Tonawanda has also been consulted and has expressed a strong interest in being part of the RFP process. The AIDS Network has also been consulted as part of this process. Over 50 agencies have attended two working sessions and two public hearings on the drafting of this plan. The Outreach Committee of the WNY Coalition for the Homeless will review all requests to assist clients seeking more than 3 months of assistance.

The City of Buffalo has staff that is part of the application review process for the Continuum of Care. The Homeless Alliance of WNY has staff representation on the City of Buffalo's Emergency Shelter Grant application review process. This cross-representation assures a coordination of homeless efforts. City of Buffalo staff attends the monthly meetings of the Homeless Alliance of WNY and the WNY Coalition for the Homeless. City staff also attends several committee meetings of the WNY Coalition for the Homeless such as Executive Committee, Outreach Committee and Advocacy Committee.

Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

3. Briefly describe how HPRP grant funds for financial assistance and housing relocation/stabilization services will be used in a manner that is consistent with the grantee’s Consolidated Plan (limit 250 words).

Response:

This Plan is an extension of our Consolidated Plan. Our plan discusses homeless prevention services, rental assistance, housing search, transportation assistance, support services, continuous case management, legal services, outreach, and referrals. It discusses the age and condition of our housing and the problems of lead paint. These items are vital to the success of the HPRP program. The HPRP funds will be one more tool to assist the city on the implementation of the goals outlined in our Consolidated Plan.

E. Estimated Budget Summary

HUD requires the grantee to complete the following table so that participants in the citizen participation process may see the grantee’s preliminary estimated amounts for various HPRP activities. Enter the estimated budget amounts for each activity in the appropriate column and row. The grantee will be required to report actual amounts in subsequent reporting.

	Homeless Prevention	Rapid Re-housing	Total
Financial Assistance	\$2,594,081	\$1,500,000	\$4,094,081
Housing Relocation & Stabilization	1,288,536	756,760	2,045,296
Subtotal			6,139,377
Data Collection			125,000
Administration			329,704
Total			\$6,594,081

¹Financial assistance includes the following activities as detailed in the HPRP Notice: short-term rental assistance, medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and motel or hotel vouchers.

²Housing relocation and stabilization services include the following activities as detailed in the HPRP Notice: case management, outreach, housing search and placement, legal services, mediation, and credit repair.

³Data collection and evaluation includes costs associated with operating HUD-approved homeless management information systems for purposes of collecting unduplicated counts of homeless persons and analyzing patterns of use of HPRP funds.

⁴This amount must match the amount entered in the cell on the table in Section A titled “Amount Grantee is Requesting.”

**Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the
Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)**

F. Authorized Signature

By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

Signature/Authorized Official

Date

Title