MINNESOTA HOUSING

Bring It Home Questions Asked and Answered – May Information Session

Below are questions asked during Bring It Home's Information Sharing Session on May 27 along with answers provided by Minnesota Housing. Follow up questions can be directed to your program contact (Peter Elwell at peter.elwell@state.mn.us or Cassi Reissmann-Doring at cassi.reissmann-doring@state.mn.us) or bringithome.mhfa@state.mn.us.

Q: For eligibility in the case of an applicant family couch hopping, could the family prove residency by providing documentation that children in the household are attending the local school? *[Asked by Mankato EDA]*

A: Yes.

Q: How should VAWA claims be addressed? *[Asked by multiple grantees]*

A. VAWA is a federal requirement that applies to federal housing programs including public housing, housing choice vouchers, and Section 811 supportive housing. Programs that are exclusively state programs are not required to follow VAWA requirements. Minnesota Housing does not require program administrators to follow VAWA requirements with the Bring It Home program (even if listed in their administrative plans), but program administrators may adhere to VAWA policies if they choose. Please note that there are state protections for domestic violence survivors. Please check with your legal counsel to make sure your program is following all state requirements

Q: What happens with time limited subsidies for programs such as Rapid Rehousing? *[Asked by Washington County CDA]*

A: There is a 6-month look ahead for currently assisted eligible households. If their rental assistance is ending within the next 6 months, the household can be accepted as eligible.

Q: Is it acceptable for currently assisted households to end participation in their current program, have a lapse at least one month with no subsidy, and then apply for BIH? *[Asked by Chippewa County HRA]*

A: Minnesota Housing strongly discourages any household from jeopardizing their housing stability to go off an existing permanent rental subsidy program and try to become eligible for BIH. Bring It Home works to reach households that are cost burdened and not currently being assisted to have the most positive impact on the state.

Q: Can households still be eligible if they owe money to other HUD programs? *[Asked by Albert Lea HRA]*

A: Program Administrators must follow their Admin Plan or Bring it Home plan regarding this issue. Program Administrators may submit an amendment to their grant contract, if they do not wish to follow their current Admin Plan.

Q: Our Admin Plan states that if a special program is running out of funds, then households can be moved to a different program. If a household has a voucher in an underfunded special program and is going to be released from it, can Program Administrators switch the household over to Bring It Home? *[Asked by Douglas County HRA]*

A: Program Administrators should follow the timeline outlined in their Admin Plan. If the Admin Plan doesn't address this, then Program Administrators should use the 6-month look ahead for programs losing funding.

Q: When reporting quarterly for data, when is a household considered an applicant (and when do we have to start tracking their info)? *[Asked by Scott County CDA]*

A: A household is considered an applicant once issued a voucher. Once a household has been issued a voucher, their information will need to be reported on in the quarterly data report.

Q: What form needs to be used to meet the Minnesota Data Practices Act requirements? *[Asked by Scott County CDA]*

A: There is not a specific recommended form provided by Minnesota Housing. Program Administrators may use an existing form or another form to meet the Minnesota Data Practices Act requirements.

Q: Can startup costs be used as security deposits for eligible households? *[Asked by Chippewa County HRA]*

A: This is not an allowable use of startup costs under the existing statute.

Q: What happens to a household if their income exceeds 50% AMI after they have been placed in a unit with a voucher? *[Asked by Scott County CDA]*

A: The household can stay in the program, but their rental assistance amount will go down. Verifying income eligibility only needs to be done during the application process. Once the household has been in a unit through the program, income is verified annually to determine their subsidy amount.

Q: If there's a single applicant that is pregnant with her 1st child, would that applicant be considered a "family"? And if so, is that considered a 1- or 2-person household? How should preference points be awarded? *[Asked by Owatonna HRA]*

A: Program Administrators should request guidance from their legal counsel on this issue.

Q: Can Minnesota Housing explain how staffing costs be reimbursed after the grant contract is executed?? *[Asked by Douglas County HRA]*

A: Minnesota Housing will allow reimbursement for startup costs the first of the following month after the contract was signed. Program Administrators can still request 50% of their startup costs up front and have access to those funds. Program Administrators will have 12 months of salary expenses to spend; this does not change what has been budgeted for. Documentation should be submitted for salary expenses starting the first month after the contract was executed.

Q: Is there a process for how to request startup costs? *[Asked by Douglas County HRA]*

A: Yes, it can be found on the Bring It Home webpage here.