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FERRY COUNTY HOMELESS INITIATIVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ISSUE

Homelessness is the result of many convergent factors, both systemic and personal. Ultimately, it is the inevitable result of the gap between a household's income and the cost of living, including housing. Exacerbating factors for some individuals and families can include unemployment or under employment, inability to earn due to restrictive ecological or environmental regulations such as are now effectively destroying logging and mining industry here in Ferry County, continuing or unexpected medical bills and lack of health insurance, chronic health problems, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder experienced by our some of our veteran population, domestic violence, physical disabilities, mental illness or drug and alcohol addictions. In Ferry County, many of the “technically homeless” are the above mentioned military service veterans unable to manage living as “part of the group” any longer and who choose to live off grid and do the best they can with what they have to work with.

Funding for homeless programs has always struggled to meet the demand; however, the funding climate under which this plan is being written will reflect a short term (3 year) and long term (5 year) goal. The Ferry County Homeless Initiative remains hopeful that we will make progress with whatever funding is available and reach out to other local institutions such as the Joint City of Republic/Ferry County Housing Authority, the City of Republic, Drug Court, Clean and Sober Housing, Victim Services, Rural Resources, local churches, the Spokane Falls college, local Veterans organizations and our County Commissioners to meet the needs of our citizens, not just check the mark on a state report. Ferry County with its small population (7,400 as of March 2017) represents unique challenges, and we recognize that we need a unique program to meet these challenges.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

We are aware that even with adequate funding; our system would not support ending homelessness as it is currently designed. The strategies outlined in this plan are designed to address some of the root causes of homelessness by making it possible for the homeless person to connect with the services that they require and meet immediate needs while allowing a time frame for those services to actually help the homeless person; i.e.: Drug Court, Clean and Sober Housing, Veterans services, DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services) on a more personal level, a local person to help move them through the process.

1. Direct hands-on help contacting and organizing needed services.
2. Engage systems designed to increase economic and educational services.
3. Safe and clean environment while pursuing needed services.
4. Facilitate the continued development of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that accurately captures the needs of the end users here in Ferry County.
5. Coordination between agencies to ensure that the homeless person or safe and sober housing client gets the best help to meet their needs.
6. To assist the “at risk” client or family who is facing homelessness and to assist as needed (within allowed parameters) to prevent this from happening.
7. Temporary assistance (within allowed parameters) to meet basic needs of clients.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Ferry County Homeless Initiative is responsible for developing and implementing this plan in compliance with **RCW 43.185C.040** and **CHG (define this here and then use the acronym in the rest of the document) Guidelines (2.1.3.1)**. Our goal is to work to align our actions and funding to work with other local services and organizations to accomplish our goal of helping the homeless, the veterans, the Clean and Sober housing

clients and other at risk persons. The Ferry County Homeless Initiative is accountable to the Ferry County Commissioners and will provide monthly data on activities. Additionally the data required in **RCW 43.185C.040** and **RCW43.63A.650** (families with children) will be reported as required to the Department of Commerce.

MEASURING PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE

The Ferry County Homeless Initiative (FCHI) is responsible for progress toward achieving other outcomes funded by state, federal and private sources such as reducing all homelessness, reducing family homelessness and assisting with re-housing for those homeless as we can. The FCHI is committed and has an overall goal of ensuring that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 90 days and assisting those individuals and veterans who choose to live in an off-grid isolated situation to receive services from time to time as needed, and the following performance measures:

- Reduce the number of people who become homeless
- Reduce the length of homelessness
- Reduce returns to homelessness
- Provide periodic services to those individuals living off-grid in isolation due to PTSD or other conditions
- Achieve thoroughness in reaching homeless population
- Provide needed services without excessive impediments, understanding that many homeless do not have the capability to wade through a lengthy, complicated system.
- Coordinate with local agencies (jail, MHP, VA, school, hospital) and schools to achieve as accurate as possible point in time counts.

FCHI staff in partnership with other providers will monitor data in the Homeless Management System (HMIS).

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

FCHI has three strategic plans to end homelessness: one for chronically homeless individuals, one for families with children and one for those at risk of becoming or being homeless such as those looking for clean and sober housing as part of the Drug Court program. In order to provide a clear vision, FCHI has integrated these plans into one set of goals and strategies to best meet the individual needs of the populations we are trying to help, while respecting their innate rights to decide their own lifestyle.

Our work is guided by federal and state legislation and our goal is to meet the guidelines set forth while remaining as flexible as needed to actually help those needing help. Essentially, we are working to shift our primary focus away from restrictive time-limited housing with supportive services to permanent situations with tailored, transitional and supportive services.

VISION

The vision of this plan is to create a system that will support those in need of temporary help. The system must be flexible enough to respond to the needs of our unique population in Ferry County within the scope of our budgeting constraints.

For lasting and effective change to take place, traditional systems transformation is required. We strive for a paradigm shift from the status quo to a system that is individual and family centered, respecting the innate rights of the client's lifestyle choice, provider informed and funder supported.

An individual- and family-centered system necessarily tailors all services and interactions to the needs of those it serves. When done in this manner, families and individuals get the right services, at the right time and at the right level. This is the utmost goal of the FCHI.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our community should:

1. Affirm that housing and lifestyle choice is a basic human need
2. Provide a continuum of service options that meet individual needs
3. Provide flexible funding
4. Seek innovative solutions, and question the status quo and empower individuals to choose their own lifestyle
5. Encourage local businesses and organizations to be involved with our efforts to address the homelessness issue in our County

SECTION 2: UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

Studies on homelessness are complicated by inconsistent definitions. Federal programs to assist persons who are homeless provide a wide range of services, many of which have complicated requirements and are difficult for the homeless individual to navigate on their own.

For the most part these definitions share common language that defines homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Differences in definitions primarily relate to the inclusion both of individuals who are sharing the housing of other persons (i.e. doubled up) due to loss of housing or economic hardship or choice, of persons living in trailer parks and persons living off-grid in isolated areas, and others living in substandard housing. The latter definition provides a much broader population and is more representative of local conditions in Ferry County. This is the definition and sub-populations that will be targeted by FCHI.

Essentially, the population we will serve must meet the following criteria:

- Lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Sleeps in public or private place not typically meant for human habitation like cars, abandoned buildings or parks
- Needs clean and sober housing as directed by Drug Court
- Will be homeless within 14 days
- Has and will continue to experience long term housing instability, including frequent moves and staying with family or friends
- Has by choice chosen to live in an off-grid situation, and may need temporary help from time to time with shelter, transportation or help negotiating with available service and/or eligibility requirements

This definition and the broader population it represents make it difficult to quantify the number of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. FCHI is committed over the course of the next three years to quantify the number of people falling under this broader definition and reporting said data to Ferry County, HMIS as required by **RCW 43.185C.040** and **RCW 43.63A.650**, and to the Department of Commerce as required by **CHG GUIDELINES (2.1.3.1)**.

SECTION 3: SUB-POPULATIONS

There are many reasons people become and remain homeless. In order to end homelessness, we must target our interventions to the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness in our community. Ferry County providers seek to provide housing and services specific to the needs of different sub populations, including but not limited to:

- Chronically Homeless Individuals and Families with Children
- Persons exiting institutions or under Drug Court Jurisdiction
- Persons with Serious Mental Illness and or Substance abuse issues
- Persons with HIV/AIDS
- Unaccompanied Youth
- Veterans
- Populations at risk of Homelessness

DEFINITIONS:

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS *INDIVIDUALS*-FAMILIES: an individual or a family with a disability who has been homeless for more than one year or 4 times or more in the past 3 years.

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN: household with minor children, including single or partnered pregnant females who meet the federal Housing and Urban Development (hereafter known as HUD) definition of homelessness. It is much easier to count those in emergency and transitional housing than

those who are sheltered or doubled up. The sheltered count of homeless families is merely a sample of the actual number.

PERSONS EXITING INSTITUTIONS OR UNDER DRUG COURT AUTHORITY:

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES-Ensuring that individuals released from prison and jail find appropriate places to live is critical to public safety and healthy families and communities. People who do not find stable housing in the community are more likely to recidivate than those who do.

DRUG COURT AUTHORITY-People participating in the Drug-Court Program of Ferry County have a critical need for “Clean and Sober” shelter. Availability of “Clean and Sober” shelter is a critical part of their recovery and those who are unable to find it are more likely to recidivate than those who do. Felony convictions create a barrier to accessing safe and affordable housing. Employers and landlords alike routinely screen out people with criminal backgrounds, making it difficult for ex-offenders or those who have completed, or are working to complete their sentence to re-establish themselves within the community.

HOSPITALS-Discharge of homeless patients from the health care or mental health system is a concern, particularly those who still need a low level of care to remain healthy. While this plan will not provide low-level care, we will try to address shelter needs and work with local services to meet their needs.

FOSTER CARE-According to the “Foster Youth Transition to Independence Study” conducted by the Office of Children's Administration Research (2004), within one year of exiting foster care, approximately:

- 13% had experienced homelessness;
- 50% had completed high school or obtained a GED;
- Less than 50% were employed

- Of that 50% employed, 47% or less were making wages at, or below the poverty line; and
- 30% were enrolled in college

Youth exiting the Foster Care system at age 18 are at extremely high risk of experiencing homelessness due to adverse life experiences, failure to obtain an education, lack of life skills, and extremely low incomes.

The Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1922 in April 2007.

“The legislature finds that providing needy youth aging out of the state foster care system with safe and viable options for housing to avoid homelessness confers a valuable benefit on the public health, safety, and welfare. The goal of this legislation is to “ensure that all youth aging out of the state dependency system have access to a decent, appropriate and affordable home in a healthy safe environment to prevent such young people from experiencing homelessness, and reduce each year the percentage of young people eligible for assistance upon aging out of the system.

PERSONS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES-Mental illness often makes it difficult for individuals to find and retain housing, maintain employment, and navigate the health, housing, and social service system. Individuals in poverty with mental illness are at increased risk of homelessness. Homeless individuals with mental disorders remain homeless for longer periods and have less contact with family and friends. Mental illness prevents individuals from carrying out essential aspects of daily life, such as self-care, household management, and interpersonal relationships. Mental health treatment for this population is critical to maintaining housing stability. The FCHI will work with appropriate available services as needed to meet this need, as FCHI will provide shelter, transportation to appointments and point of contact for such individuals.

PERSONS WITH SERIOUS SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES-While many individuals affected by substance abuse never become homeless, those who are in poverty and addicted are clearly at increased risk. FCHI will endeavor to work with the Ferry County Drug Court to meet needs of clean and sober

housing.

PERSONS WITH HIV/AIDS: For homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS, the conditions of homelessness are even more dire. The impact of HIV/AIDS on a person's immune system makes homelessness a serious health risk. Homeless shelters, (which we do not have in Ferry County) may provide respite from the elements, but are often a significant health risk to people with HIV/AIDS due to their compromised immune system. Here in Ferry County we will endeavor to protect a person with HIV/AIDS by attempting to provide them with a safe environment and refer them to appropriate medical services and providing transportation if needed.

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH-Homeless, unaccompanied youth are youth under the age of 18 who are not living with a parent or guardian. In Ferry County, most unaccompanied youth are living with family, friends or living off-grid in isolated areas in campers or tents. HUD has included unaccompanied youth who are couch-surfing, doubled up or lacking fixed, regular night time residence. This population is inherently difficult to count in our community since there are no shelters in Ferry County for homeless youth. Additionally, homeless unaccompanied youth sometimes run away from home due to abuse, and typically do not want to be found. Substance abuse is often a part of this story, either in the parent's case or the youths. Under state law, most agencies are required to report the whereabouts of runaway youth under 18 to the youth's parents, police or the Children's Administration of Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. For this reason, it is difficult to engage this population. The FCHI will comply with state law when dealing with homeless, unaccompanied youth and refer them to the appropriate agency as required.

VETERANS-According to HUD and Veterans Affairs, The [Veteran Homelessness: A Supplemental Report to the 2010 Homeless Assessment Report to Congress](#), nationally, approximately 12% of the homeless population are veterans. Here in Ferry County, we estimate that percentage to be much higher. Veterans are released from duty, often with Post Traumatic

Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, physical injuries and other disabilities as well as substance abuse disorders they have acquired in an attempt to cope. Veterans can have trouble finding work when they return due to limited transferable skills, or an inability to be in social or traditional employment settings. While this has long been a problem, the VA has enhanced services in recent times.

The FCHI will endeavor to address this sub-population by:

- a. identifying homeless veterans in our County,
- b. ensuring that a veteran sits on the Board of Directors
- c. developing a close working relationship with local veteran services
- d. providing transportation vouchers for needed appointments
- e. providing hands on assistance with required documentation

VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-A sizable portion of the population in poverty experience domestic violence at any given time. Without housing support, many of those in poverty are at risk of homelessness or continued violence. Lack of resources may mean that victims are forced to choose between the abuses at home and those they may face on the streets. In Ferry County there is no homeless shelter so the FCHI will endeavor to work with local law enforcement to provide safe, temporary lodging up to 5 days while other resources are located, provide transportation vouchers if needed and work within the scope of our limited resources to address the issue.

SECTION 4: POPULATIONS AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS IN FC

Currently, in 2017 Ferry County is facing the Kinross Mine closure due to the inability to obtain required permits. Due to excessive, restrictive environmental and ecological regulations, we are daily dealing with the continuing loss of income from traditional livelihoods such as logging, ranching with free range grazing and mining that many County Citizens have counted on for generations to support their families. We do expect an

increase in foreclosures as well as an increase in the population of at-risk families.

People who have exhausted their Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits are also at significant risk of becoming homeless.

CHILD WELFARE AND FOSTER CARE

Families involved with the child welfare system are sometimes homeless or at significant risk of losing their housing. These families often face a “Catch 22”. In order for parents to reunite with their children once they have been put into foster care, they must have stable housing. Unfortunately, subsidized housing programs often require that parents have their children in their care in order to qualify. If safe reunification is not possible, children remain in foster care until they turn 18, whether they are ready to be independent or not. According to a national survey, 25% of foster youth reported that they had been homeless at least one night within 2.5 to 4 years after exiting foster care. (Cook, R. (1991). A national evaluation of title IV-E foster care independent living programs for youth. Rockville, MD: Westat, Inc.). FCHI proposes to work with existing services such as Drug Court, Victim Services and Rural Resources to coordinate resources and interventions for these populations.

SECTION 5: KEY AREAS OF FOCUS FOR FERRY COUNTY

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Education is critical to obtaining and maintaining living wage employment. FCHI will work with our local branch of Spokane Valley College to improve access to training availability and job readiness in our homeless populations and FCHI will endeavor to have a College Faculty or Staff member on our Board of Directors.

EMPLOYMENT

FCHI will endeavor to build a relationship with local businesses seeking employees. Through our relationship with Spokane Valley College, we will work toward building employment skills and familiarize our clients with the

job search process. Using our local library, we will assist our clients in applying for jobs online. We will provide transportation vouchers for public transportation to enable our clients to have job interviews.

TRANSPORTATION

Housing providers report that one of the biggest barriers to self-sufficiency for their clients is transportation to and from work. Housing near job centers is often not affordable for low wage earners. The rural environment of Ferry County is a unique challenge for those needing transportation to and from work. FCHI will endeavor to meet this unique challenge on a case by case basis through the Rural Resources bus service, local car-pooling and limited transportation vouchers in a system similar to Catholic Social Services where a qualified driver will be paid a set fee per mile while providing transportation.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

Many people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness receive some sort of public assistance, such as UI, TANF, SNAP, SSI, and SSDI. It is important to work with the administrative bodies for these benefits to identify shared clients, and work together to help them achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency while at the same time, respecting their lifestyle choices.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Access to higher education and trade schooling will be the key to living wage jobs for many households. There are several opportunities to assist this population access higher education, including seeking educational grants to our local Spokane Valley College.

SECTION 6: CURRENT HOUSING AND SERVICES-FERRY COUNTY

CONSOLIDATED HOMELESS GRANT

An emergency rental assistance program offered by Rural Resources for rapid re-housing of homeless clients and homeless prevention for those individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless.

SECTION 7: OTHER STRATEGIC PLANS

We plan to work with several other service and educational providers as well as have direct involvement with them by inviting key members to serve on the Board of Directors for the Ferry County Homeless Initiative:

Rural Resources

Ferry County Drug Court

Victim Services

Spokane Valley College

Ferry County Memorial Hospital

Curlew Medical Clinic

Mountain Veteran Center- Danna Hughes

Other interested local Veterans

City of Republic & City Police

Ferry County Commissioners

Ferry County Sheriff Department

Local Businesses

Other local organizations such as the Grange, Churches and Clubs

CONCLUSION:

pending obtaining local housing information

Ferry County Homeless Initiative

GUIDELINES

FOR

Emergency Rental, Shelter, & Utilities Assistance

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Document Recording Fees

Guidelines

1. Program Overview

The Local Document Recording Fees, House Bill 2163, RCW 43.185C00

The purpose of the HB 2163 program is to provide, emergency temporary shelter, emergency utilities, homelessness prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are experiencing homelessness. The funds under this program are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance. The funds will provide one time *of emergency assistance per category of assistance in a* twelve-month period.

2. Eligibility - Who can Receive Assistance with HB 2163 Funds?

It is the policy of the HB 2163 program to provide emergency assistance to clients who are currently homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Priority is given to clients who identify as homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, who are seniors, disable, veterans or households with children. Clients must show willingness to work with a Case Manager, completed all intake requirements and keep scheduled appointments during the screening process. Upon initial contact with potential HB 2163 clients, an assessment will be completed to determine eligibility. This assessment includes a review housing status, financial status and other community supports.

Prevention – for Households At-Risk or at Imminent-Risk of Homelessness

Prevention assistance is available for households who are at-risk or at-imminent risk of homelessness according to HUD's definition below.

Households who:

1. Have annual incomes below 50% AMI; **AND**
2. **Do not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to obtain or maintain permanent housing and prevent literal homelessness; AND** At-Imminent Risk
3. Will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days.

Rapid Re-Housing – for Households who are Literally Homeless:

Rapid Re-Housing assistance is available for persons who are literally homeless* according to HUD's definition below.

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

1. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; **OR**
2. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); **OR**
3. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Households who:

1. Fit one or more of HUD's literally homeless definitions; **AND**
2. ^{3rd} party or self-declaration of homelessness; **AND** Rapid Re-Housing
3. Do not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to obtain permanent housing.

*This includes literally homeless individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous or life threatening conditions related to violence.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter will be for a maximum of five days at an available hotel who has agreed to house the client.

Households who:

1. Fit one or more of HUD's literally homeless definitions; **AND**
2. ^{3rd} party or self-declaration of homelessness; **AND**
3. Do not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to obtain permanent housing.

Emergency Energy Assistance

Households who:

1. **Have annual incomes at or below 50% AMI; AND**
2. Have a history of homelessness; **AND**
3. Have received a shut off or delinquent notice; **OR**
4. Utility deposit requirement.

3. Documentation

In order to receive emergency assistance, households must have the following*:

*All of this information must be clearly noted and documented in the client's case file.

Emergency Rental Assistance

1. Initial Consultation & Eligibility Determination
The household must receive an initial consultation and eligibility assessment to determine income and housing status eligibility (homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.)
2. Completion of the rental assistance application
A rental assistance application is given to a client after initial consultation and all eligibility determination information is completed.
3. Housing stability plan to include
 - a. Needs assessment to include specific housing and self-sufficiency goals
 - b. Action steps to retain permanent housing after emergency assistance ends

Emergency Shelter Assistance

1. Initial Consultation & Eligibility Determination
2. Completion of the Emergency shelter assistance application
A plan must be established prior to entering shelter to insure stability.
3. Approval by hotel
 - a. A hotel agreement must be completed between the hotel and the client.

Emergency Energy Assistance

1. Initial Consultation & Eligibility Determination:
The household must receive an initial consultation and eligibility assessment to determine income and housing status eligibility (homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.)
2. Completion of the energy assistance application
An energy assistance application is given to a client after initial consultation and all eligibility determination information is completed.
3. Utility Only Assistance Form:
 - a. Shut off notice; OR
 - b. Delinquent notice

Documenting Income

Definition

Income is money that is paid to, or on behalf of, the head of household or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other household member 18 years or older. (Victims fleeing domestic violence do not have to report the abuser's income.) Income includes the current (not projected) gross income (annualized) of all adult (18 years and older) household members and unearned income paid to an adult attributable to a minor.

Inclusions

The following types of income "inclusions" must be counted when calculating current **gross** income:

- Earned income
- Self-Employment/Business Income
- Interest & Dividend income
- Pension/Retirement income
- Unemployment & Disability income
- TANF/Public Assistance
- Alimony and child support income
- Student financial aid
- Armed Forces income

Exclusions

- Earned income of children (under 18)
- Inheritance and insurance income
- Medical expense reimbursement
- Income of live-in aides
- Certain state payments regarding disability
- Armed Forces Hostile Fire pay

Annualizing Wages and Periodic Payments

When calculating income based on hourly, weekly, or monthly payment information, add the gross amount earned in each payment period that is documented and divide by the number of payment periods. This provides an average wage per payment period. Depending on pay periods used by the employer or the schedule of periodic payments, the following calculations convert the average wage into annual income:

- Hourly Wage multiplied by Hours Worked per Week multiplied by 52 weeks
- Weekly Wage multiplied by 52 weeks
- Bi-Weekly (every other week) Wage multiplied by 26 bi-weekly periods
- Semi-Monthly Wage (twice a month) multiplied by 24 semi-monthly periods
- Monthly Wage multiplied by 12 months

The definition of income reflects a household's income at the time they are seeking assistance. Accordingly, documents and information collected to verify income should be recent. Documentation dated within 30 days is acceptable. However, for public assistance benefits, (e.g., SSI, food stamps), a benefits statement received any time within the twelve months prior to the time of application and

reflecting current benefits received by a household is allowed. A copy of a recent bank statement indicating direct deposit is also acceptable.

Range of Documentation Types in Order of Preference

- Third Party – Source
- Third Party – Written
- Third Party – Oral
- Self Certification

Ferry County Average Median Income (AMI)

FY 2017	Income Limit	Persons In Families							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ferry County	30% AMI	12,500	16,240	20,420	24,600	28,780	32,960	36,850	39,250
	50% AMI	20,800	23,800	26,750	29,700	32,100	34,500	36,850	39,250
	80% AMI	33,250	38,000	42,750	47,500	51,300	55,100	58,900	62,700

4. Eligible Program Expenses

Benefits are capped per household and each household shall only receive assistance once per twelve month period. The benefit caps are as follows.

Ferry County	Assistance Type	Persons In Families							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rental	\$548		\$729		\$920		\$1078	
	Utilities	\$110		\$143		\$174		\$204	

Rental Assistance for both Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing can include the following types:

- One time emergency rental assistance
- Possible security/damage and utility deposits (equal to no more than 1 months' rent) for rapid re-housing.
- Last month's rent (paid to the owner of housing at the time of the security deposit and first month's rent are paid)

Use with Other Subsidies

Financial assistance cannot be provided to a household who currently is receiving another rental subsidy program.

Note: Rental arrears can be paid on behalf of a household receiving a subsidy from another public program (e.g., Section 8) if it represents a different time period.

Lease Requirements

To receive emergency rental or utility assistance, a lease (or rent agreement) must be between the household and the landlord. A copy of the lease must be retained in client files.

Rent Standards

Once a unit is identified, the household will submit paperwork with unit information that includes deposit/rent amount, utility information, housing location, bedroom size and type. If the unit works with the program the landlord/manager must complete a Landlord Habitability Standards Certification Form. Some circumstance pending case by case may increase or decrease the amount of assistance provided.

Fair Market Rent (FMR)

Rental assistance cannot be provided unless the rent does not exceed the Fair Market Rent established by HUD (<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html>), as provided under [24 CFR part 888](#), and complies with HUD's standard of rent reasonableness, as established under [24 CFR 982.507](#).

Rent Reasonableness

Rent reasonableness is determined prior to any payment being made to the landlord. Rural Resources program staff collects documentation regarding the rental unit (location, age, type, size, utilities and amenities). Staff uses comparable unassisted units as rent reasonable comparison from the Section 8 Fair Market Rent. Rent reasonableness applies to all Rural Resources owned properties as well. Rent reasonableness for Tax Credit properties must be determined within HUD approved range of rents for the Section 8 program. All documentation is kept in the client file.

5. Housing Stabilization Services for Emergency Services:

Housing Stability Case Management

Housing Search and Placement

Housing Stability Case Management

Rural Resources case management services will be largely determined by the initial client assessment and the housing stability plan. Case management will be no less than a once a month with each household on the program. Case management will continue for as long as the client remains on the program and considers the following to determine and maintain case management.

- Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system to evaluate households applying for or receiving homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance;
- Conducting the initial evaluation including verifying and documenting eligibility, for households applying for homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance;
- Developing, securing, and coordinating services and obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits;
- Monitoring and evaluating household progress;
- Providing information and referrals to other providers;
- Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.

Housing Search and Placement

Services or activities necessary to assist households in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable permanent housing, include the following:

- Assessment of housing barriers, needs, and preferences;
- Development of an action plan for locating housing;
- Supply housing listings

6. Data Collection

Rural Resources will enter client data into a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Data must be collected in accordance with the Data Collection Directives (Appendix A) and the Agency Partner HMIS Agreement (see Appendix B).

Rural Resources will follow all state and federal laws governing HMIS, including collecting informed written consent from program participants, not denying service based solely on program participant refusal to provide data to an HMIS, protecting program participant confidentiality, not collecting personally identifying information from program participants that are victims of domestic violence,

and other requirements defined in [RCW 43.185C.030](#), [43.185C.180](#), and [VAWA Reauthorization Section 605](#).

Program participant data collected by HMIS systems will be transmitted to Commerce and then sent to DSHS for additional analysis. Written program participant consent forms should reflect this data transmittal. Program participant data will be used for research purposes only and only viewed by research staff and HMIS system administrators. Program participant data will not be disclosed to staff involved in determining program eligibility, or used in any way to determine program eligibility.

7. Termination of Participation Procedure

It is the goal of Rural Resources Community Action to provide appropriate and adequate services to eligible individuals regardless of race, religion, color, gender, pregnancy, age (including those over 40), national origin (including ancestry), ethnicity, disability (as defined in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act), marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, income or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law.

Causes of denial of assistance include, but are not limited to, the individual or household's ineligibility for the program or failure to provide verifiable evidence of eligibility, lack of program participation, etc.

The program client appeal policy allows clients to file an appeal if they have received a termination notice from the program.

All written appeals will be investigated promptly and in as impartial and confidential manner as possible, and a timely resolution of each appeal communicated to the parties involved.

CLIENT APPEAL PROCEDURE

- Written appeals must be submitted within ten (10) days from the termination. Appeals submitted outside of this timeline will not be considered.
- Upon receipt of the written appeal, the program administrator will conduct an investigation of the allegations and provide a decision within ten (10) days. The decision will be provided in writing to both the household and the affected Rural Resources service program.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS

Rural Resources will comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements in 24 CFR 5.105(a). In addition, Rural Resources will make known that HPRP rental assistance and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis and ensure that all citizens have equal access to information about HPRP and equal access to the financial assistance and services provided under this program. Among other things, this means that Rural Resources will take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

No client will be discriminated against because of race, religion, color, gender, pregnancy, age (including those over 40), national origin (including ancestry), ethnicity, disability (as defined in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act), marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law.

AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR HOUSING

Under section 808(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act, HUD has a statutory duty to affirmatively further fair housing. HUD requires the same of its funding recipients. Rural Resources will affirmatively further fair housing opportunities for classes protected under the Fair Housing Act. Protected classes include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. Examples of affirmatively furthering fair housing include: (1) marketing the program to all eligible persons, including persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency; (2) making buildings and communications that facilitate applications and service delivery accessible to persons with disabilities (see, for example, HUD's rule on effective communications at 24 CFR 8.6); (3) providing fair housing counseling services or referrals to fair housing agencies; (4) informing participants of how to file a housing discrimination complaint, including providing the toll-free number for the Housing Discrimination Hotline: 1- 800-669-9777; and (5) recruiting landlords and service providers in areas that expand housing choice to program participants.

8. Confidentiality of Client Records

Rural Resources, will keep all records or files pertaining to clients under lock and key with designated personnel granted access to those files.

9. Washington Residential Landlord-Tenant Act

All tenants who receive CHG rental assistance may receive a copy of Washington State Landlord Tenant Act upon request and will be advised on how to seek legal assistance when problems arise.