

The Emergency Solutions Grant Program represents a new opportunity for our communities to address homelessness by investing in solutions that end homelessness. The Balance of State Continuum of Care Steering Committee encourages the State to keep the following principles in mind while making important funding decisions:

- Shifting the homeless response system is about the entire statewide system, not individual communities, and thus decisions should not be based on any one agency or one CoC.
- The homeless services system is changing and we all want to be a part of that change. We need a diverse and broad set of stakeholders involved, committed, and engaged in an inclusive process. The homeless system cannot end homelessness alone. We need partners to target resources to help us create sustainable solutions. These partners include but are not limited to: Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Labor, Workforce Development, and rural transportation services.
- The new ESG funding formula should be based on the future of funding and not what was funded in the past (i.e. traditional Emergency Shelter Grant activities). Counties that did not build shelter or transitional housing should not be penalized by a funding approach based on these old models.
- The new ESG funding formula should be fair and transparent. In order to avoid incentivizing higher homeless populations, the formula should not be based on numbers of homeless people. It should incentivize practices and programs that end homelessness.
- The goal of the new crisis response system is not to put people into emergency shelter, but to get people into permanent housing quickly and stabilize them in that housing. Shelter plays an important role of the crisis response system but should not be the cornerstone of our system.
- The ability to invest in flexible rapid re-housing and prevention programs is essential to addressing homelessness in rural communities. Research and our experience tells us that investing in rental assistance, flexible financial assistance, and housing stabilization services works and is a solution to homelessness for our communities.
- Available funds should be used to assist in retooling the crisis response system and creating programs that focus on permanent housing and are cost-effective. Change is hard, but this change promises a system in which we are better able to serve homeless individuals and families. While it is challenging for our agencies to adapt to this change, we welcome the opportunity because we want what is best for all persons experiencing homelessness.