



# HOME STRETCH HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND POLICY

The Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund, managed by Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA), was created to provide a flexible source of funding to help Alameda County eligible consumers and their families obtain and maintain long-term, stable housing of their choice in Alameda County.

## Who Qualifies for the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund?

Applicants for assistance must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- The applicant is currently experiencing homelessness or has exited homelessness within the last 60 days. Applications requesting rental assistance should be submitted at or prior to move in and must be fully completed within 30 days of move in. Applications requesting move in assistance and safety and accessibility assistance must be fully complete within 60 days of move-in and all items ordered, and payments made within 90 days of move in.
- The applicant must be working with an agency that serves households experiencing homelessness or recently exiting homelessness in Alameda County. The service provider must assist and support the consumer through the application process. The application should be completed jointly and submitted by the service provider.
- The applicant agrees that Alameda County can follow up with the applicant and the applicant’s service providers in order to obtain information about the applicant’s housing situation and stability for up to 13 months after assistance is provided.

## What are Eligible Expenses for the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund?

There are three categories of eligible uses. In order for a funding request to be approved, there must be rationale explaining why the funding is necessary and how it will impact the applicant’s housing stability.

Rental Assistance	Move In Assistance – Maximum of \$4,000 for a household of 1, an additional \$500 per additional household member can be approved if the overall limit of \$8,000 has not been reached	Safety and Accessibility
<p><i>Eligible expenses:</i> Security deposit and 1<sup>st</sup> month’s rent only.</p> <p>The Fund does not pay back rent to avoid eviction.</p>	<p><i>Eligible expenses:</i> Utility start-up costs, housing application fees, <u>essential</u> home furnishings, household items such as food preparation items and bed/bath linens, and non-emergency, non-medical transport such as a moving company.</p> <p>See “Approved Home Furnishings and Household Items” checklist. Please note that luxury items will not be purchased.</p>	<p><i>Eligible expenses:</i> Needed items and services to make the home safe and accessible: medically necessary items such as hospital beds and Hoyer lifts; unit modifications to meet accessibility needs such as ramps and grab bars.</p> <p>Landlord approval for modifications is needed.</p>
Up to of \$8,000 per household based on need		Up to of \$8,000 per household based on need

## How are Requests Approved?

If an applicant’s situation is uncertain or unusual, or if the provider is unfamiliar with the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund, it is recommended that the provider contact the Home Stretch office at 1 (510) 567-8030 or [HomeStretchFund@acgov.org](mailto:HomeStretchFund@acgov.org) *prior* to preparing an application for assistance to determine whether or not the request is appropriate and eligible for consideration.

Eligible service providers must submit a fully completed application with all necessary attachments (HMIS forms, lease etc.) for the use of these funds on behalf of a particular applicant. Eligible service provider is defined as any person who works for an organization that receives funding from Alameda County to provide services to the eligible population. Eligible service providers are required to attest they do not have any personal financial interest in the properties or vendors associated with the application and that the information on the application is correct based on the knowledge the service provider has. Applicants will be required to provide documentation that demonstrates eligibility for the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund. All applications must include a copy of their lease or rental agreement; for those who have not yet moved in an intent to rent that includes the intended lease start date, the security deposit amount, and the tenant rent amount will suffice. Applications requesting rental assistance should be submitted prior to or at move in and must be completed within 30 days of move in. For other types of assistance, completed applications must be submitted within 60 days of move in and all requests must be completed, including orders being placed and payments made, within 90 days of move in. The lease or rental agreement must reflect current laws and policies related to rentals and the landlord must have the legal right to rent the property.

For requests that include home furnishings or household items, please reference the “Approved Household Furnishings and Household Items” checklist, only items on this list will be approved. Please keep in mind that the total allowable amount for rental assistance and move in assistance is \$8,000 and anything chosen will need to fit within that limit, including taxes and shipping. Total maximum cost for move in assistance is \$4,000 for a household of 1; for larger households an additional \$500 may be approved per additional household member, provided the overall \$8,000 limit will not be exceeded.

Upon approval of the request, Home Stretch staff will ask you to support the eligible applicant to pick the items they would like from an approved vendor and follow the instructions for the chosen vendor. If an organization that provides services prefers, they can use an alternative vendor and may pay for the items and request reimbursement. In this case, the vendor and W-9 forms will need to be completed for the organization requesting reimbursement and an itemized receipt or receipts must be submitted along with the invoice. Once the vendor and W-9 forms are submitted, future requests will not require these 2 forms. Invoices and receipts must be separated by applicant. Only items on the “Approved Home Furnishings and Household Items” checklist will be approved for reimbursement and the total cannot exceed the approved amount. Service providers should not assume that an application will be approved until approval is verified by HCSA staff. The applicant may choose items from up to two of the approved vendors. All items must be able to be delivered and the cost of delivery, if there is any, must be included in cost calculations.

For utility start-up costs, a copy of the utility bill with account number information must be provided. In some instances, a deposit is required to initiate utilities that are not included in the rent. Please contact the utility company to find out what the startup costs would be so this may be included in the application request.

For moving service requests, a copy of the quote from the moving service must be provided.

Requests for safety and accessibility items and services must be accompanied by written verification of need from a medical professional stating that the items or services are medically necessary. Verification of the attempt to obtain requested medical equipment using insurance is also needed.

Typically, within 5 business days of submitting a completed application, the provider will be notified if the application has been approved and under what, if any, conditions. Approvals will be based on eligibility and the likelihood that the Home Stretch Housing Fund will have a positive, long-term, measurable impact in addressing the applicant’s homelessness. The applicant’s ability to afford the rent on an ongoing basis will be part of this evaluation. Approvals will also be based on the funding available.

The service provider that submitted the application on behalf of the applicant will be notified of the outcome and updated about next steps.

## **How are Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund Payments Made?**

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**For rental assistance:** The service provider and/or landlord must provide the necessary documentation for a payment to be made. For landlords or property management companies, this includes an invoice, a signed W-9 form from the property owner (scanned copies and DocuSign accepted), and a vendor form. Without these documents from the landlord, property management company or housing provider, the HCSA Finance Department staff cannot issue payment to the vendor. HCSA must be able to verify that the vendor has the right to rent the property. HCSA has search tools to do this, however if ownership cannot be verified the application cannot be approved.

**For utility payments:** Once the request has been approved and a copy of the utility bill obtained, HCSA will make the payment directly to the vendor.

**For moving services:** Once the request has been approved, the moving company must submit an invoice, a signed W-9 form, and a vendor form (if they are not already an established vendor).

**For household furnishings and household items:** Once the request has been approved, the applicant will select the authorized furniture and household items from an approved vendor. Home Stretch staff will purchase the items and they will be sent to the applicant's address or, in some instances, the service provider. If an organization that provides services prefers, they can use an alternative vendor and may pay for the items and request reimbursement. In this case, a vendor form and W-9 will need to be completed and an invoice for the organization requesting reimbursement will need to be submitted along with an itemized receipt or receipts. Once the vendor form and W-9 are submitted, future requests will not require these 2 forms. Only items on the "Approved Home Furnishings and Household Items" checklist will be approved for reimbursement and the total cannot exceed the approved amount. Service providers should not assume that an application will be approved until approval is verified by HCSA staff.

**For medical equipment:** Home Stretch staff will order the item to be shipped directly to the applicant or the service provider can pay for the item initially and request reimbursement. In this case, the vendor form and W-9 will need to be completed and an invoice for the organization requesting reimbursement will need to be submitted along with an itemized receipt. Once the vendor form and W-9 are submitted, future requests will not require these 2 forms. Service providers should not assume that an application will be approved until approval is verified by HCSA staff.

Once all the final paperwork is received, checks are typically provided within five (5) business days. Checks will be mailed to the property owner or vendor. All funds are issued to eligible third parties. Funds are never paid directly to applicants.

## **How will unit modifications and safety service requests be conducted?**

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The landlord must be notified and approve of the modifications, this needs to be documented. The service provider will be responsible for assisting the applicant to secure a vendor to provide the unit modifications or services after the approval. The approval will include a maximum amount that the modifications can cost. Once the work is complete, the County will pay the vendor. Vendors must be licensed, bonded and insured; the service provider is responsible for ensuring that the vendor meets these standards.

## **Where Can I Obtain the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund Application?**

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All forms and documents related to the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund may be found at <https://homelessness.acgov.org/coordinated-entry.page>.

The application may also be obtained by emailing the Home Stretch office at [HomeStretchFund@acgov.org](mailto:HomeStretchFund@acgov.org).

Contact Info: E-mail: [HomeStretchFund@acgov.org](mailto:HomeStretchFund@acgov.org)  
Phone: 1 (510) 567-8030