Metro Denver Homeless Initiative Flex Fund Policies and Procedures

Thanks to support from The Denver Foundation and Metro Mayors Caucus, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) has funds available to help households who are experiencing homelessness quickly exit homelessness and obtain permanent housing. The Flex Fund can be used to remove financial and other barriers that households face while attempting to secure housing in a high cost, low-vacancy rental market. This document outlines MDHI’s Flex Fund policies and procedures. Other information related to the Flex Fund can be found here: www.mdhi.org/Flex_Fund.

I. Access and Availability

Any organization or provider that partners with OneHome or is a member of the Metro Denver Continuum of Care (CoC), can submit a request to MDHI’s Flex Fund to help individuals or families experiencing literal homelessness obtain permanent housing. There is a limited amount of funds available. Even when all eligibility criteria are met, not all requests will be approved.

II. Eligible Participants

Individuals and families in the Metro Denver region that are experiencing literal homelessness and would continue experiencing homelessness if it weren’t for this one-time assistance are eligible for Flex Fund assistance. In some cases, and with prior approval from MDHI, the Flex Fund may be used for a CoC or ESG program participant that is currently housed or needs to be re-housed. However, this is not an eviction prevention program.

Literal homelessness is defined as an individual or family who is residing in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or place not meant for human habitation such as a bus stop, camping, or vehicle.

Eligible participants must be able to maintain housing after receiving Flex Fund assistance.

III. Requesting Assistance

Before filling out the request form, the person submitting the request and the participant should attempt to get assistance from all other resources in the community. Efforts to obtain assistance from other sources must be documented and indicated in the request form. MDHI will not accept or approve a request submitted by a participant/client. The household must be working with a partner organization or agency for MDHI to fully process the request.

Submit a request form by clicking on “REQUEST FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HERE” link found here: www.mdhi.org/Flex_Fund. Do not include client’s personal identifying information on this form. Make sure all other information on the form is completed and filled out correctly.
MDHI will respond to the person submitting the request for assistance within 1-3 business days. If the request is approved, MDHI will send an e-mail to the person who submitted the request, indicating the required documentation to collect and send back. The person submitting the request and the participant should keep searching for alternate resources in the community and assume the request has been denied unless MDHI sends a notice of approval with a deadline to submit paperwork.

MDHI does not have the capacity to collect paperwork and communicate with the vendor and person seeking assistance. If the paperwork is not collected and sent within 10 business days of MDHI’s approval, the request form will have to be re-submitted and MDHI can no longer guarantee the assistance. If it is an urgent request, meaning the payment is needed within 1-2 days, please reach out to Jackie.Hernandez@mdhi.org directly to work out an alternate process.

IV. Eligible Costs and Backup Documentation

The Flex Fund can be used for one-time move-in costs and landlord mitigation. There are several categories of assistance. The Flex Fund can cover up to $3000 per participant, but only if that amount is available and needed. **If the participant needs the Flex Fund for something that is not listed below as an eligible cost, it must be approved by MDHI before submitting a request form.** All vendors (property owners, moving companies) must fill out a W-9.

The following describes the eligible Flex Fund costs and the examples of backup documentation that should be submitted to MDHI before a payment is processed.

**Move-in Assistance:**

- **Security Deposit:** Copy of lease or move-in letter showing amount of deposit with prospective residential address and client’s name
- **One-time move-in costs:** Invoice from moving company, invoice from truck rental company, other invoices related to move-in costs
- **First month’s rent or month of rent following the household’s move-in month:** Copy of residential lease or proof of monthly rental payment
- **Rental Arrears – past unit:** Proof of rental arrears owed by participant from property owner/landlord or collections agency (landlord letter, eviction notice, statement of balance, etc.)
  
  Note: This is not an eviction prevention program. Rental arrears owed to a previous landlord or property owner may be considered.
- **Utility Assistance:**
  
  1. **Utility Deposits (including water):** Utility bill in the participant’s name showing amount of utility deposit
  2. **Utility Arrears when it impacts a participant’s ability to establish a new service:** Utility bills in participants name showing arrears or
- **Pet Deposits or one-time pet fees:** Copy of residential lease or move-in letter including amount of pet fee
• Relocation to another community when there is a confirmed housing opportunity: Letter from case worker describing the participant’s permanent housing option available, invoice for travel costs

**Landlord Mitigation**

• Reimbursement to landlords for damages, repairs, or vacancy payments:
  1. **Damages/Repairs**: Invoice including an itemized list of damages and cost of repairs, move-out checklist (if applicable)
  2. **Vacancy Payment**: Promissory note form landlord stating that they will or will continue to rent to OneHome program participants if a vacancy payment is provided (must be submitted by landlord/property owner)

V. **Payments**

Payments will be made on behalf of the participant and issued to third party vendors such as a utility company, landlord/property owner, moving company, etc. MDHI cannot directly reimburse a participant. MDHI can reimburse a referring agency if the vendor is not willing to wait for the check to be processed. If an agency is seeking a reimbursement, they must also provide MDHI with a current copy their agency’s W-9. **Agencies that do not get prior approval from MDHI will not be reimbursed.**

All service providers must fill out a request form and get approval before issuing a payment and expecting a reimbursement.

If it is an urgent request, or the vendor needs the payment within 1-2 business days, indicate the urgency in your follow-up e-mail to Jackie.Hernandez@mdhi.org. Unless otherwise determined by the referral source and MDHI, payments will be mailed to the vendor’s address indicated on the W-9.