



2023-2025 HOME TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE (TBRA) PROGRAM

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF ENERGY, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

APRIL 2023

APPLICATION DUE BY MAY 19, 2023

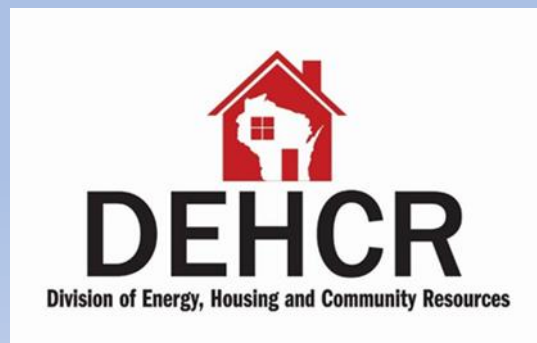


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2023-2025 HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program Information

Program Description

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) was created to provide federal assistance to states in order to produce decent and affordable housing opportunities, particularly housing for low- and very low-income households. The Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR) allocates HOME funding to support the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program in non-HOME entitlement areas in Wisconsin. Grant agreements are awarded on a two-year performance period to provide rental assistance to individuals and families that have incomes at or below 60 percent of the County Median Income (CMI) and meet other eligibility requirements.

Because the TBRA program allows local flexibility in many program design areas, DEHCR allows individual grantees to develop community-specific programs. TBRA programs must comply with HOME regulations such as tenant occupancy and income requirements, unit and rent standards, and administrative performance. Participating agencies are subject to performance indicators, such as participation levels, affirmative outreach efforts and availability of suitable housing. As with all HUD HOME programs, the TBRA program requires a best effort to provide 25 percent match. Eligible match items cannot include a client's portion of the rent or any federal funding sources.

HOME TBRA funds shall serve individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Applicant agencies may further define more specific populations within their proposed TBRA service area(s).

Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing

DEHCR encourages TBRA programs to adopt a Housing First philosophy and/or Rapid Re-Housing program model.

The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) defines 'Housing First' as follows:

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible – and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed. This approach prioritizes client choice in both housing selection and in-service participation.

Housing First programs share critical elements such as:

- A focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible;
- A variety of services delivered to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as needed and entirely voluntary basis; and

- A standard lease agreement to housing – as opposed to mandated therapy or services compliance.

[HUD](#) defines ‘Rapid Re-Housing’ as follows:

[Rapid Re-Housing] will provide financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. The funds under this program are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance. The funds will provide for a variety of assistance, including short-term or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services, including such activities as mediation, credit counseling, security or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and case management.

Supportive Services

DEHCR requires grantees to make a best effort to provide supportive services to TBRA clients. Grantees may provide supportive services directly or contract services through another agency. Supportive services include but are not limited to case management, mental health services, transportation assistance, and life skills training.

Clients may be encouraged but *cannot* be required to participate in supportive services; as such, they cannot be terminated from a TBRA program due to non-participation in supportive services.

Self-Sufficiency Programs

Grantees may choose to operate their TBRA program as a self-sufficiency program. For the purposes of TBRA, DEHCR defines a self-sufficiency program as:

A program whose goal is to increase clients’ earned income and reduce their dependency on public assistance by providing education, job training, counseling, and other forms of social service assistance in addition to rental assistance so that clients can acquire the skills necessary to obtain self-sufficiency.

Unlike other TBRA programs, self-sufficiency programs *may* require clients to participate in supportive services; however, clients still *cannot* be terminated due to non-participation. They may, however, be denied a renewal of their TBRA subsidy.

Other Program Design Considerations

TBRA programs must comply with applicable HOME regulations, including unit occupancy standards, client income requirements, Housing Quality Standards (HQS), Fair Market Rent (FMR) and Rent Reasonableness standards, and administrative performance. Applicant agencies should review the [2013 HOME Final Rule](#) for more information.

Eligible Applicant Agencies

Governmental entities and private-not-for profit agencies located in Wisconsin are eligible to apply under this TBRA application. In addition, a non-stock, not-for-profit corporation organized under Chapter 181 or a religious society organized under Chapter 187 and housing authorities are eligible.

All applicant agencies must be outside of the HOME entitlement areas and be in good standing with DOA and DEHCR (no unresolved monitoring findings, no outstanding required reports, no major audit finding, etc.). Applicant agencies must be registered with the Federal System for Award Management (SAM) and cannot be listed as a debarred contractor.

Agencies receiving HOME TBRA funds will be subject to a monitoring process conducted by DEHCR staff at least once during the performance period.

HOME TBRA funds are not available in entitlement areas that receive HUD HOME funds directly. These entitlement areas include the cities of Eau Claire, Green Bay, Kenosha, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, and Racine and the counties of Dane, Milwaukee, Rock, and the Waukesha/Jefferson/Washington/Ozaukee County Consortia.

Eligible Activities

TBRA program funds may be utilized for the following activities:

1) Rental Assistance

The term of rental assistance with HOME funds may not exceed 24 months; however, contracts can be renewed, subject to the availability of HOME funds. Rental assistance must not exceed the difference between the client's rent and 30 percent of the client's household income.

2) Security Deposits

The maximum amount of security deposit assistance per client is equivalent to two months' rent for the unit. Security deposit assistance must be provided to clients as a grant, not a loan.

3) Utility Assistance

Utility assistance can only be provided to clients who are also receiving rental assistance. Grantees can define which utilities they will cover such as heat, electric, water, sewer, and trash. Phone, internet, and cable are ineligible utility expenses. Grantees define the maximum amount of utility assistance per client by setting a flat dollar cap or by paying only for certain utilities (e.g., heat/electric or water/sewer/trash).

4) HQS Inspections

Grantees can charge whichever is less to TBRA program funds: \$50 per inspection (\$35 per re-inspection) plus mileage reimbursed at the current federal rate or the actual staff or contractor costs of performing the inspection.

5) Household Income Determinations

Grantees can charge whichever is less to TBRA program funds: \$50 per income determination or the actual staff cost of completing the income determination. If income determinations are conducted outside a grantee's office, they may charge whichever is less for mileage reimbursement: the current federal rate or the rate at which the grantee agency reimburses for mileage.

6) Administrative Costs

The grantee may use up to 10 percent of the total award for administrative costs to support housing assistance activities, including staff salaries and administrative expenses.

Any program activity not explicitly listed in this section is ineligible.

Client Eligibility

Eligible clients must meet the following criteria:

- (1) Have a household income at or below 60 percent of the county median income; and
 - a. Household income should be calculated per [HUD's Part 5 income definition](#).
- (2) Be homeless or at risk of homelessness. *Agencies may determine the definition of homeless or at risk of homelessness used for the TBRA program.*

Length of Assistance

Under Wisconsin's TBRA program, assistance can be offered for up to 24 months; however, contracts can be renewed for an additional 24 months, subject to the availability of HOME TBRA funds and eligibility re-certification. Leases cannot be signed for less than one year unless documentation shows that both the client and the landlord have agreed to a shorter lease period.

Reports

Monthly expenditure reports and set-up forms will be required. Expenditure reports and set-up forms must be emailed to [DEHCR Fiscal](#) and the [TBRA program manager](#) on or before the due date, stipulated by the Division.

A final expenditure report for the performance period is due no later than 60 days after the grant agreement ends.

Audit Requirements for Federal-Funded Awards

Applicant agencies that receive federal funds during the fiscal year shall comply with the requirements set forth in the State Single Audit Guidelines issued by the Department. Audit reports are due to the Department within the earlier of 30 calendar days after receipt of the auditor's report(s), or nine months after the end of the audit period, if applicable.

Please review the [Department of Administration's Single Audit Compliance Supplement](#) for details on submission of the reporting package.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Participation

DEHCR requires that grantees receiving TBRA funds must participate in the statewide HMIS. Awarded grantees should contact the Institute for Community Alliance for assistance in getting started in Wisconsin's HMIS, if applicable.

Grant Awards

Recommendations of eligibility for TBRA funding will be made by administrative review and presented to the DEHCR administrator for approval. The Division reserves the right to negotiate the grant agreement amount, authorize budget items and specific program content with eligible applicant agencies prior to entering into a grant agreement. All aspects of this application will become contractual obligations. All funds must be expended during the two-year grant period and cannot be carried forward into the following year. The two-year grant period will begin on **July 1, 2023** and end on **June 30, 2025**. Grantees will be eligible for renewal for one additional, two-year grant cycle, based on satisfactory performance.

Justifiable modifications may be made during the performance period only through prior consultation with, and written approval from DEHCR. Failure of the awarded applicant to accept these obligations may result in cancellation of the award.

Notice of the Right to Withdraw

The Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources reserves the right to amend, modify, or withdraw this application package and any of the grant program instructions or procedures contained herein. The Division may exercise such right at any time without notice and without liability to any applicant agency or other parties for their expenses incurred in the preparation of a proposal or otherwise.

Notice of Non-Approval and Rights of Applicants

Each applicant agency whose proposal is reviewed by DEHCR staff shall receive written notice of the determination of approval or non-funding of the proposed project.

Each applicant agency whose project has not been approved for an award shall be given an opportunity to discuss the reasons for non-funding or may write requesting the reasons for the decision. The DEHCR representative will clarify the reasons for the grant award decision.

Appeal Process

- The appeal must include the name of the application and a short summary of why the applicant agency is appealing the decision.
- The appeal must be filed with the Division Administrator within 30 business days of the date of the denial letter.
- The Division Administrator will review the application and will decide whether to reverse the denial decision.
- If the Division Administrator denies the appeal, the applicant agency must file an appeal with the Secretary's Office within 30 days from the date of the appeal decision.
- The Secretary's Office will review the application and will make a final determination.

2023-2025 HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Application Instructions

Introduction

Please review this information before completing the application.

Applicant agencies that have questions regarding the TBRA application may contact the TBRA program manager by phone at (608) 261-7013 or by email at Dana.Wallace1@wisconsin.gov. For questions regarding HMIS, please email the Institute for Community Alliances.

Application Format

It is **strongly recommended** that applicant agencies utilize the Microsoft Word version of the 2023-2025 TBRA application. Write responses to the questions within the textboxes of the application. Applicant agencies must submit a PDF version of the TBRA application with all questions answered and all attachments included.

Review the TBRA application in its entirety before proceeding with the final submission.

Application Submission

All applications must be submitted by email to the [DOA Supportive Housing](#) inbox and the [TBRA program manager](#). The applicant agency will receive a confirmation email once their application has been submitted.

The application email **must** include the following attachments:

- 1) 2023-2025 TBRA application (PDF version), including responses to all questions and budget tables
- 2) Completed and signed submittal authorization (electronic signature is acceptable)
- 3) Completed and signed TBRA certifications and assurances (electronic signature is acceptable)
- 4) SAM.gov eligibility status

The closing date for the receipt of all applications, under this solicitation, will be **Friday, May 19, 2023 at 11:59 pm**.

Unless requested by the Division, no additional information will be accepted from an applicant agency after the deadline for the submittal of applications.

Cover Page

Applications must use the cover page from the 2023-2025 TBRA application template as the cover of the applicant agency's application.

Applicant Information

The following items must be included for an applicant agency to be considered eligible for funding:

- Applicant agency's name
- Physical address of the primary office location
- Mailing address for the purchase order and reimbursement requests
- Applicant agency's UEI number
- Applicant agency's HMIS name and ID number
- SAM.gov proof checkbox and status documentation
- Applicant agency's proposed TBRA service area(s)
- TBRA program manager contact information: Provide the name, title, phone number, and email of the person who prepared the application, and can answer questions related to the information contained in the application.
- Official authorized signatory contact information: Provide the name, title, phone number, and email of the person who has the authority to approve and sign the TBRA application.
- Client referral contact information: Provide the name, title, phone number, and email of the person who individuals and households can be referred to for the TBRA program.
- Agency website link

Funding Request

Include the total amount of program and administrative funds requested in the TBRA application. No more than 10 percent of the TBRA program funds requested may be allocated towards administrative costs.

Submittal Authorization

An official authorized to sign for the applicant agency and to sign the grant agreement must execute the submittal authorization.

Officials authorized to sign include, but not limited to:

- President of the Board of Directors of a non-profit organization
- Chief elected official of a local unit of government

Application Questions

Complete the check box questions and answer the narrative questions within the text of the application.

Narrative Questions

Information provided in these sections will help DEHCR understand what the applicant agency's capabilities are, what is being planned with the TBRA funds, the population(s) that will be served, and why this service area needs assistance.

Racial Equity Questions

DEHCR is dedicated to increasing racial equity across the state of Wisconsin and particularly doing so in all programs receiving DEHCR administrated funds. Complete all check box questions and answer the narrative questions within the text of the application.

Contractual Responsibility and Subcontracting Question

Indicate whether the applicant agency will provide all TBRA services directly or subcontract with an outside entity. If the applicant agency plans to subcontract, please describe the services that will be contracted out and who will be responsible for completing those activities.

As the awarded agency, it is their responsibility to monitor subcontractor(s) and ensure that they are adhering to all TBRA program regulations and requirements.

Practices, Policies, Procedures and Documentation

The following practices, policies, procedures, and documentation are required of each grantee:

- Signing authority documentation
- Accessibility practices and resources
- No faith-based activity requirements
- Client termination policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Conflict of interest policy
- Non-discrimination policy for clients and employees
- Drug free workplace policy
- Anti-lobbying requirements
- Recordkeeping and retention

Financial Management Questions

Maintaining clear records and tracking each funding source separately is required by DEHCR. Complete all check box questions within the text of the application.

Budget Information

This section provides information on the TBRA funds that the applicant agency is requesting. All figures should be rounded to the nearest dollar.

Proposed TBRA Program Operating Budget

Enter the applicant agency's estimated total expenses for operating the TBRA program. Estimate the amount of funding the applicant agency will need amongst the various bedroom sizes. No more than 10 percent of the TBRA program funds requested may be allocated towards administrative costs.

Complete the budget table by identifying the following:

- Fair market rent (FMR) standards for the proposed TBRA service area(s) for each bedroom size
- Amount of TBRA funds being requested for each bedroom size
- Estimated number of households that will be assisted for each bedroom size
- Total operating budget for the TBRA program
- Estimated amount of funding required to conduct income determinations and HQS inspections.
- Total amount of administrative funding being requested

TBRA funds allocated to each program activity are considered estimated totals. Budget amendments are not required for funding changes between program activities.

TBRA Program Certifications and Assurances

A signed copy of these certifications and assurances must accompany the applicant agency's TBRA application. The certifications and assurances will be in effect for the full 24-month duration of the grant agreement.

Appendix

All applicant agencies must provide documentation from SAM.gov that they are not in a period of debarment/suspension or in ineligibility status (i.e., have no active exclusion records). To be eligible to receive TBRA funding, this documentation **must be included** in the submission email.