

**Frequently Asked Questions
FRF Shelter Funding (Outbreak Response)**

Last Updated: 3/18/2022
(New and updated questions and/or answers in green)

General Eligibility

Q. Do we need to submit requests within a certain timeframe?

A. Yes. Requests for expenses incurred between 9/15/21 and 2/28/22 must be submitted no later than April 15th, 2022, to be eligible for funding. Please see the “Eligibility over Time” document for additional information.

Q. Do we need to have a defined outbreak (three or more unrelated cases) to apply for this funding? [Revised 3/18/22]

A. This varies based on the activity/funding category and the time period in which expenses are/were incurred. Please see the “Eligibility over Time” document for additional information.

Q. What type of settings are eligible to apply for this funding?

A. Applicants must be a nonprofit agency, local unit of government, or tribal nation. **AND** Applicants must meet the specific criteria below for each type of eligible setting:

Congregate Emergency Shelter: To qualify as a *Congregate Emergency Shelter*, the facility must

- Have homelessness as a criterion for entry
- Have shared bedrooms/sleeping areas, bathrooms or dining areas, **and**
- EITHER:
 - a. be listed in the most recent [HUD Housing Inventory Chart \(HIC\)](#) **[link updated 3/18/22]** as an Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing; **or**
 - b. receive funding designated for emergency shelter from a public source (such as Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, local government, federal Health and Human Services, etc.); **or**
 - c. be licensed as an emergency shelter.

Day Shelter or Drop-In Center: To qualify as a day shelter or drop-in center, the facility must:

- Have as its primary purpose providing temporary shelter for people experiencing homeless, **and**
- Allow persons experiencing homelessness to stay in the facility for as many hours as it is open

Street Outreach Programs Serving Encampments: To be eligible, street outreach programs must

- Target groups of unsheltered individuals where there is additional risk of Covid transmission.

Community Isolation Space [Added 3/18/22]: To qualify as a Community Isolation Space, an eligible applicant must:

- Identify the geographic area they will be serving (at least one county or region).

- Assure that funding will only be used to provide isolation space for COVID-positive people and may not be used to maintain current shelter operations or expand shelter capacity in response to a general need for increased shelter.
- Accept referrals of persons needing COVID isolation from one or more congregate shelters in that area.
- Contact your local public health and/or emergency management officials to discuss your isolation space model, referral process and community isolation space needs and obtain a letter of support.
- Contact the Minnesota Dept. of Health Congregate Settings team (Health.R-Congregate@state.mn.us) to discuss your COVID mitigation protocols.

As of March 1, 2022, expenses incurred for community isolation and quarantine space may only be reimbursed if the above criteria have been met prior to incurring the isolation space costs.

Hazard Pay

Q. What kind of Hazard Pay is eligible under this funding?

- A. FRF Shelter funds are governed by the current **Treasury Dept. [Interim Regulations for Fiscal Recovery Funds \(FRF\)](#)**, which include important limitation on hazard pay (referred to as “premium pay” in the regulations). Organizations should consult with their auditors or other counsel to ensure their proposed payments are in compliance with these regulations, which limit hazard pay to (among other things):
- An amount up to \$13 per hour in addition to wages or remuneration the worker otherwise receives and in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$25,000 per eligible worker.
 - Workers needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors.” In general, workers who are not essential for continuity of operations are ineligible for premium [hazard] pay.
 - Performing essential work, defined as *“work involving regular in-person interactions or regular physical handling of items that were also handled by others. A worker would not be engaged in essential work and, accordingly may not receive premium pay, for telework performed from a residence.”*

Q. Can we provide hazard pay as a lump-sum or shift bonus instead of an hourly premium wage?

- A. The **Treasury Dept. [Interim Regulations for Fiscal Recovery Funds \(FRF\)](#)** does not appear to explicitly prohibit this kind of premium (hazard) payment structure; however, there are at least two reasons that hourly hazard pay is preferable for remaining in compliance with FRF Recovery regulations:
- i. Lump-sum or one-time payments must be tied to a specific payroll period or timeframe. This ensures that overall pay, when averaged between hours worked – does not exceed the hazard pay limit of \$13/hour. The responsibility for verifying compliance with this limitation falls with the provider, not DHS – agencies will need to be able to demonstrate compliance when asked as part of an audit or fiscal review.
 - ii. Hazard or premium pay is supposed to be prioritized to compensate lower income workers who perform essential work and should be distributed on an equitable basis. Lump-sum or one-time payments distributed regardless of total hours worked, position held, etc. may not achieve this goal and therefore are discouraged.

Schedule for Submissions Review, Award and Funding

Q. What is the schedule for reviewing requests for funding? How soon can we expect a response to our funding request and/or award notice?*

A. Currently, the deadline and schedule for review and approval of requests is as follows:

Friday: Requests submitted by end of day will be reviewed the following week.

Monday-Wednesday: State review team begins review of submissions from prior week; *State staff may reach out with follow-up questions during this time*

Thursday-Friday: Final review and decisions made on previous week's requests. If state questions for an applicant are fully resolved, they can expect to receive a **funding notice** by no later than 12 noon Friday.

* While funds will generally be disbursed within two-three weeks of a request submission, the exact timing of funding disbursement to an agency will be determined by a number of factors, including:

- What day of the week a request was submitted
- For new applicants, whether they have returned their required documents (Assurances and W-9s) quickly.
- Whether follow-up questions are quickly resolved. In some cases, holidays or other factors outside of the state's control may also delay payment.

Q. What additional paperwork is needed if my agency is awarded funds?

A. If your organization is awarded funds, you will be required to submit two required documents before we can release funds to you. These documents will be provided to selected applicants at the time of your funding notice letter.

- The FRF-Shelter Assurances form must be signed by an authorized representative and states that your organization will comply with American Rescue Plan requirements, all applicable state and federal laws, and other miscellaneous requirements (e.g., eligible uses of funds and recordkeeping requirements).
- Nonprofit organizations must also provide a completed IRS W-9 form.

In the event that you submit more than one survey request, you will not be required to submit another Assurances form and W9.

Timeframe for Expenses

Q. What happens if we don't use up all the funds that we are asking for?

A. Unspent funds can be returned to DHS via the fiscal processor (Catholic Charities) once it has been determined (through communication with DHS) that the applicant has no further need for the funds.

However, because the survey is relatively easy to complete, applicants should do their best to estimate their anticipated needs for a 30-day period and reapply as necessary.

Staff Wages (Quarantine/Isolation)

Q. How should we request funding for staff who must quarantine or isolate due to Covid? We won't know how much until it happens – so can funds be requested retroactively? If so, how often?

A. Funds may be requested for up to 30 days of expenses, and may be requested retroactively for staff who have already isolated or quarantined. Agencies may request funds as often as every pay period, but for efficiency we ask that staff expenses be submitted monthly whenever possible.

If an agency requires funds to be awarded *before* providing this benefit to staff, it may submit a request *estimating* the amount of funding needed for the next 30 days (ideally based on recent history). Agencies will need to reconcile any unspent funds, and work with OEO to identify how excess funds will be expended or returned.

Q. If we are applying for Staff Wages (for quarantine or isolation), do we need to maintain documentation of their positive test result (or Covid exposure)?

A. No additional record-keeping regarding Covid exposure or testing is required for this expense (beyond regular payroll and time tracking that are normally required for federal and state funds).

Q. If staff have already had to isolate or quarantine (and used sick/paid-time off to do so), may we request reimbursement for their leave? If so, how far back?

A. Yes, if the leave has already been taken, an agency may apply retroactively for staff funding, provided it is used to 'replenish' their sick or vacation balance, or to reimburse staff who have taken leave due to Covid.

The timeframe for retroactive expenses depends on the following:

- If there was an active outbreak (three or more cases) during the requested timeframe, expenses may be charged back to September 15, 2021, or the start of the outbreak, whichever is later.
- If there was no active outbreak during the requested timeframe, expense may be charged back to December 21, 2021.

Program/Financial Reporting

Q. What type of reporting do we need to keep track if we receive funds?

A. Entities selected for funding will be required to report basic financial information (i.e. amount received, amount spent), and the impact of funds on staffing and services. Upon request, funding recipients will need to provide source documentation for expenses (e.g. time cards for staff).

The reporting tool is currently under development, and will be shared with selected entities via the [Heading Home Alliance](#) website once prepared.

Quarantine at Entry:

- Q. We require unvaccinated persons applying for shelter to quarantine in a hotel/motel until they receive a negative test result. In some cases, this is 2-3 days. Could we apply for funding under Quarantine category for this expense?**
- A. Costs for quarantine space are only eligible for persons who have had a known exposure to a close contact who has tested positive for Covid. Because most shelter guests come and go throughout their stay, requiring quarantine at entry or intake is not the most effective strategy to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

MDH and CDC recommend that external spaces or private rooms would be best prioritized for people with symptoms, known exposures to confirmed cases, or COVID-19 positive cases. Intake quarantine costs would not be eligible under FRF Shelter funding.

If a shelter chooses to test at entry, MDH recommends rapid testing, followed by a routine schedule of PCR testing for all guests according to the [CDC testing guidelines for shelters](#) or the [MDH shelter toolkit](#).