

October 15, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this letter is to notify All County Welfare Directors and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments in California of funds available for counties and tribes to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through the Home Safe Program. The Budget Act of 2021 ([Senate Bill 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021](#)) appropriated a total of \$92.5 million for Home Safe in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22. This letter announces a Noncompetitive Allocation for all 58 counties and a set aside for tribal governments.



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October 15, 2021

LETTER TO ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS AND FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN CALIFORNIA

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN CALIFORNIA

FROM: CORRIN BUCHANAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF FUNDING FOR THE HOME SAFE PROGRAM**

REFERENCES: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 129](#); [SB 170](#); [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 135](#); [AB 1811](#); [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTIONS 15770 AND 15771](#); [WIC 15610.13](#); [WIC 8255](#); [WIC 8256](#); [ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) DATED JULY 29, 2021](#); [ACWDL DATED JANUARY 14, 2021](#); [ACWDL DATED AUGUST 10, 2020](#); [ACWDL DATED OCTOBER 22, 2018](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 19-114](#); [COUNTY FISCAL LETTER \(CFL\) NO. 19/20-93](#); [CFL NO. 18/19-47](#)

The purpose of this letter is to notify All County Welfare Directors and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments in California of funds available for counties and tribes to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through Home Safe. This letter also summarizes recent statutory changes enacted through [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 135 \(Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021\)](#), outlines continuing Home Safe requirements and guidance, and provides new guidance as a result of expanded funding and changes to program statute.

The Budget Act of 2021 ([Senate Bill \(SB\) 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021](#)) appropriated a total of \$92.5 million for Home Safe for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 to be expended through June 30, 2024. This letter announces Noncompetitive Allocations for all 58 counties and announces a Tribal Government Set-Aside, which will be outlined further in a separate letter.

I. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Home Safe supports the safety and housing stability of seniors and adults with disabilities served by or in the intake process for Adult Protective Service (APS) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The program may also support individuals served through a tribal social services agency who appear to be eligible for APS and who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In 2018, [AB 1811 \(Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018\)](#) established Home Safe with a \$15.0 million one-time appropriation which CDSS awarded to 25 grantees. These funds were available over a three-year period, beginning July 1, 2018, and ending June 30, 2021. [SB 170](#) authorized unspent funds from this first round of funding to be reappropriated in FY 2021-22, extending the expenditure date of the pilot funds to June 30, 2022. Counties with unspent funds may continue spending these funds through June 30, 2022. Note that these unspent funds are not reflected in the allocation table in Attachment Four.

Attachment One provides additional information regarding Home Safe requirements and core components. Counties and tribes interested in establishing a new program are encouraged to review this information, [All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) dated October 22, 2018](#), and the references linked at the beginning of this letter to understand the full program scope.

II. FY 2021-22 BUDGET UPDATES AND USE OF FUNDS

The Budget Act of 2021 ([SB 129](#)) appropriated \$92.5 million for Home Safe in FY 2021-22. CDSS will utilize five percent of the funds to administer and implement the program, ensuring that participating counties and tribes are provided technical assistance and support. The remaining \$87.875 million in funding, which is match exempt, is available as outlined in the table and described below.

Funding Use	Funding Amount FY 2021-22	Match Requirement	Expenditure Period	Application
Noncompetitive Allocation	\$82,875,000	Exempt	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	Attachments Four and Five
Tribal Noncompetitive Set-Aside	\$5,000,000	Exempt	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	Forthcoming letter

A. Noncompetitive Allocation

This letter announces the statewide Noncompetitive Allocation of \$82,875,000 for all 58 counties based on a local need methodology. Refer to Attachment Four for the allocation table.

1. Instructions for Accepting Funds

Grantees wishing to accept the Noncompetitive Allocation amount listed in Attachment Four shall review, sign, and return the Director's Certification in Attachment Five. Completed certifications should be sent to housing@dss.ca.gov. Groups of counties and/or tribes wishing to propose a regional Home Safe should consult the guidelines in Attachment Six.

CDSS encourages review and acceptance of funds as soon as possible. **Director's Certification must be submitted by Friday December 3, 2021 to receive funds.** If a county is declining an allocation, a Director's Certification should still be submitted indicating that funds are being declined.

Funds that are not accepted on or before Friday December 3, 2021 will be allocated to counties that indicate they can accept additional funds, as indicated in the Director's Certification in Attachment Five, and consistent with the methodology described below.

2. Noncompetitive Allocation Methodology

The Noncompetitive Allocation is distributed based on need. The methodology includes the following, in order of weighted importance:

- the percent of the statewide total of individuals experiencing homelessness living in the county (2020 Homelessness Point in Time Count);
- the percent of the statewide APS case load (Item #12 in January through December 2019 SOC 242 data); and
- the percent of the statewide total of households with severe cost burden living in the county (i.e., household income less than 50 percent area median income and paying more than 50 percent of income toward rent or mortgage).

A funding floor equal to \$250,000 or the FY 2018-19 allocation, whichever was greater, was applied to the Noncompetitive Allocations for all 58 counties.

3. Noncompetitive Allocation Claiming and Fiscal Information

A statewide County Fiscal Letter (CFL) for noncompetitive awards will be released shortly after the deadline for Director's Certifications. Claiming instructions for

noncompetitive awards are included in Attachment Three. Counties participating in the Home Safe program as of June 30, 2021 should continue to operate existing programs and will be allowed to claim services back to July 1, 2021 to avoid any break in services.

Note: The match requirements for Home Safe for the one-time funds announced in this letter and outlined in Attachment Three have been waived.

4. Proposals for Regional Programs

Groups of counties and/or tribes may request to form a regional Home Safe program. Regional programs rely on a shared administrative structure or program functions, which can create efficiency in many communities. Counties and tribes in rural communities, communities with a regional Continuum of Care, grantees with regional Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) awards, or neighboring tribal communities may particularly benefit from a regional Home Safe.

Considerations and instructions are outlined in Attachment Six. A consultation meeting with CDSS is required before a regional agreement is formalized, and technical assistance will be provided to design and implement regional programs. Regional allocations are, at maximum, the sum of the Noncompetitive Allocation amounts for participating counties and tribes, plus an additional \$150,000 to incentivize regional collaboration. Contact housing@dss.ca.gov to discuss regional opportunities.

B. Tribal Noncompetitive Set-Aside

CDSS will make \$5.0 million available to Federally Recognized Tribal Governments in California interested in establishing Home Safe. CDSS will release instructions under separate cover.

III. FY 2021-22 PROGRAM BUDGET AND TRAILER BILL LANGUAGE

The changes summarized below reflect amendments to [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Sections 15770-15771](#) and updated program guidance regarding the additional Home Safe expansion funds pursuant to [AB 135](#) (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021). Additional support for scaling the program will also be provided, including technical assistance and training opportunities. Changes to APS eligibility as a result of [AB 135](#), will be released under separate cover

C. Changes to Home Safe Eligibility Requirements

Section 15770 (b)(1): Eligibility expansion to individuals in the process of intake to APS

The eligibility for Home Safe was expanded to include individuals who are in the intake process for APS. This allows grantees to serve a client who is experiencing a housing crisis and needs housing services related to their immediate health and safety when they have been assigned for investigation but before a full APS intake is completed. Home Safe services are not contingent upon the outcome of the investigation. Grantees are encouraged to consider how best to incorporate these considerations into their Home Safe intake protocol.

Section 15770 (b)(1): Eligibility clarification for Tribal Governments

Eligibility now includes “an individual who may be served through a tribal social services agency who appears to be eligible for adult protective services, as defined in Section 15610.10.” These eligibility changes facilitate the operation of Home Safe in tribal communities. Additional guidance on Home Safe operations in tribal communities will be forthcoming.

D. Clarifications to the Definition of Homelessness/At Risk of Homelessness

Section 15770 (c)(3): Eviction notices and defining “at risk of homelessness”

Amendments clarify that individuals who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence “may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.” Grantees should be attentive to all forms of housing instability that place an individual at high risk of homelessness in addition to eviction or foreclosure notices. For more information on risk factors that may indicate that someone is at high risk of becoming homeless, refer to Attachment Two.

Section 15770 (c)(4): Unsafe living situation in defining “at risk of homelessness”

Amendments clarify that an individual may be considered at risk of homelessness if their primary nighttime residence or living situation poses an imminent health and safety risk and the individual also lacks the resources to obtain other permanent housing.

Section 15770 (f): Definition of primary nighttime residence/living situation

A definition of primary nighttime residence or living situation was added to clarify that eligible individuals may own or rent their home, live in a home without paying rent, live in a shared housing situation with others, or live in a hotel/motel as temporary shelter.

The definition of “homeless or at risk of homelessness” also includes people who reside in a private or publicly operated shelter or people who reside in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

E. Updates to Home Safe Program Guidance

In addition to statutory changes, CDSS is updating guidance to better align with emerging research on best practices and lessons learned from the first three years of program implementation. These updated program requirements are consistent with statutory authority outlined in [WIC Sections 15770 and 15771](#).

Assessment Requirements

WIC Section 15771 requires the use of an assessment tool to identify each individual’s housing needs and create a plan to meet those needs. Previously, CDSS required use of the Prevention/Re-Housing Prescreen Tool for Single Adults (PR-VI-SPDAT) or Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) unless an exemption was provided. Effective immediately, **CDSS will no longer specifically require use of the PR-VI-SPDAT/VI-SPDAT**. Grantees may select or design their own assessment tool to be applied consistently across the program.

Refer to Attachment One for more guidance on assessment tools. CDSS strongly encourages assessment tools to incorporate principles such as harm reduction, racial equity, and reducing barriers to entry.

Allowable Expansions in Services

WIC Section 15771 (c)(2)(F) requires that participants in Home Safe who are experiencing homelessness and require supportive housing be referred to the Continuum of Care (CoC) for longer term services to promote housing stability. However, CDSS would like to clarify and encourage that these participants also be served by Home Safe while awaiting a longer-term housing placement and to ensure stability once transitioned to supportive housing. Home Safe grantees should operate the program in close coordination with the local homelessness response system, as well as health, legal services, and other systems designed to meet the needs of seniors and adults with disabilities. Coordination will allow grantees to avoid duplication of resources in their local community and allow participants to be connected to needed services. Refer to Attachment Two for more information on expanding services to seniors and adults with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

New Uses of Funding

In addition to traditional rental subsidies described in Attachment One and Attachment Two, Home Safe funding may also be used to support Home Safe clients with shallow rent subsidies until another stream of assistance is available. Funds may also be used as bridge funding for longer-term care including use to provide enriched supportive services or auxiliary services in residential adult and senior care facilities when other funding is not available for this use. Higher care placements may include permanent supportive housing with intensive supportive services, Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs), and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs), skilled nursing facilities and should be consistent with [Olmstead principles](#). Refer to Attachment Two of this ACWDL for additional information on the recommended use of shallow rental subsidies.

F. Other Changes to Home Safe

Section 15771 (e)(B): Waived Match Requirements

Counties and tribes are exempt from the dollar-for-dollar match requirements for the \$92.5 million in one-time funds awarded to grantees between July 1, 2021, and through June 30, 2024.

Section 10618.8: Use of funds for data contracts

CDSS may use program expansion funds for formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts. These activities will be contracted and conducted at the state level and in coordination with the legislature, stakeholders, and client advocates.

G. Other Relevant Budget Updates

The FY 2021-22 State Budget also includes investments in programs across the state that may assist Home Safe clients, including emergency shelter under Project Roomkey, capital funding under Homekey, the Community Care Expansion program, the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program, and several other investments to support seniors and adults with disabilities who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Refer to Attachment One for additional information and resources that should be considered as grantees expand and adapt local Home Safe Programs. All grantees are also encouraged to review the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council's [Putting the Funding Pieces Together: Guide to Strategic Uses of New and Recent State and Federal Funds to Prevent and End Homelessness](#).

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER
PAGE 8

Contact the CDSS Housing and Homelessness Branch at 916-651-5155 or housing@dss.ca.gov with questions regarding this letter or Home Safe.

Attachments

- Attachment One: Overview of Home Safe and Core Service Components
- Attachment Two: Resources for Serving Participants Across a Continuum of Needs
- Attachment Three: Home Safe Fiscal and Budget Considerations
- Attachment Four: FY 2021-22 Home Safe Noncompetitive Allocation Amounts
- Attachment Five: FY 2021-22 Home Safe Director's Certification and Instructions and Funding Conditions
- Attachment Six: Information on Establishing Regional Programs

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

This attachment provides an overview of Home Safe and the core service components of the program. Counties and tribes interested in establishing a new program are encouraged to review this information and related guidance linked throughout this attachment to understand the full scope of the program.

With the exception of items outlined in the 'FY 2021-22 Program Budget and Trailer Bill' section in the main body of this ACWDL, new and continuing grantees shall operate Home Safe in accordance with the guidelines outlined in [ACWDL dated October 22, 2018](#), and program requirements outlined in [WIC Sections 15770 and 15771](#). Contact housing@dss.ca.gov with any questions or to request technical assistance.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Home Safe is a locally administered program that aims to prevent or address homelessness among seniors and adults with disabilities who are APS clients or in the APS intake process. Tribal grantees may also serve individuals that appear eligible for APS who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A. Program Eligibility

Eligibility for Home Safe is defined in [WIC Section 15770](#) as an individual that meets all three conditions:

1. Is an adult protective services client, or is in the process of intake to adult protective services (including those who have been assigned for investigation);

Note: Individuals who may be served through a tribal social services agency do not need to be involved in adult protective services, but should otherwise appear to be eligible for adult protective services as defined in WIC Section 15610.10

2. Is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness; and
3. Voluntarily agrees to participate in the program.

If a grantee cannot accommodate all eligible clients, a prioritization framework will be needed. Among eligible individuals who are at risk of homelessness, Home Safe must prioritize those who are most likely to fall into homelessness if not for Home Safe intervention. This prioritization must be driven by program assessment tools and strategies which may include a combination of housing assessment and APS assessment tools. If a referred individual does not meet eligibility or prioritization criteria, Home Safe must help connect them to other available resources in their community.

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

Grantees are strongly encouraged to use self-attestation and other low barrier methods of verifying eligibility and/or prioritization. This is based on the assumption that people who are enrolled in APS and seeking housing assistance are likely already more vulnerable to homelessness than the general population.

Refer to the 'Assessment Tools' section of this attachment, as well as Attachment Two, for more guidelines on assessments and prioritization.

Defining Homelessness or At Risk of Homelessness

"Homelessness and imminent risk of homelessness" is defined in [WIC Section 15770](#) as any of the following:

- A. A person who lacks a fixed or regular nighttime residence and either of the following apply:
 - (A) The person has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter, hotel, or motel, designed to provide temporary living accommodations.
 - (B) The person resides in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- B. A person who is in receipt of a judgment for eviction, as ordered by the court.
- C. A person who has received a pay rent or quit notice or who will otherwise imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice, if all of the following are true:
 - (A) The right or permission to occupy their current housing or living situation will be, or there is credible evidence that it will be, terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance
 - (B) A subsequent residence has not been identified or secured, including, but not limited to, an individual exiting a medical facility, long-term care facility, prison, or jail
 - (C) The individual lacks the resources or support network, including, but not limited to, family, friends, or faith-based or other social network, needed to obtain other permanent housing.
- D. A person who has a primary nighttime residence or living situation that is either directly associated with a substantiated report of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation or that poses an imminent health and safety risk, and the person lacks the resources or support network needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Home Safe grantees should consider the following when assessing eligibility criteria regarding whether an APS client meets the definition of homeless or at risk of homelessness:

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

- Official notice of an eviction is not required to qualify as imminently homeless, and programs should try as much as possible to curtail an eviction if the participant is deemed likely to become homeless, including through use of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (ERAP) which is also referred to as the [California COVID-19 Rental Relief program](#) (see Attachment Two).
- Participants in a living situation that poses a threat to their health or safety may qualify as "at risk of homelessness" if the person does not have the resources or support network to obtain other permanent housing, even if that unsafe living situation is not a direct result of a substantiated report of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Homeowners may be eligible for Home Safe if they are at risk of homelessness and lack the resources to secure a subsequent living situation.

B. Program Design

Home Safe should serve participants until housing stability is reached or a connection to longer-term permanent housing is made, which may require short, medium, or long term supports depending on the individual's needs. Consistent with [WIC Section 15771\(c\)\(2\)](#), programs should offer the following interventions and services to all clients as needed.

1. Intensive Case Management

Home Safe must offer housing-related intensive case management services, consistent with Housing First principles, to offer participants assistance in achieving housing stability. Housing related case management should include motivational interviewing and be consistent with a trauma informed approach.

Housing related case management should be provided in a manner consistent and in coordination with the APS service plan and may include, but is not limited to, the following activities in relation to supporting Home Safe client achieve and maintain housing stability:

- coordinating all components of a participant's housing service plan and APS plans;
- working with family and community to identify any and all available supports related to housing stability;
- various forms of in-depth problem solving related to housing stability;
- assisting clients in applying for other public assistance and benefits to support housing stability, including assistance in accessing rent relief programs such as [ERAP](#);

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

- assisting clients in accessing physical and behavioral health services in order to support housing stability; and
- connections to benefits advocacy programs, such as HDAP, in order for Home Safe clients to achieve or maintain housing stability.

Home Safe housing related case management should complement but not replace or supplant traditional APS case management. Client participation in Home Safe case management is voluntary and clients should not be penalized, sanctioned, or disenrolled from Home Safe due to failure to attend appointments or their inability to meet with a case manager.

2. Housing Stabilization

Often delivered through case management and direct financial assistance such as rental assistance, housing stabilization ensures a participant's housing is safe, sustainable, promotes community integration and allows them to age in place in the least restrictive setting consistent with [Olmstead principles](#). Home Safe funding should be used to provide all Home Safe clients with housing stabilization services specific to their unique needs.

Examples of housing stabilization services and assistance may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- provision or connection to legal assistance
- eviction prevention
- tenant education
- credit repair
- cleaning services
- hazard removal
- assistance with hoarding
- home repairs or modifications

Home Safe typically provides a crisis intervention to address an immediate health and safety issues related to housing. However, it is important to ensure clients are linked to longer term resources to avoid future housing related health and safety risks. Many housing stabilization services that prevent future crisis are available through resources in communities either through the social services department or community based organizations. APS programs are typically familiar with these organizations and are encouraged to leverage existing APS related partnerships to ensure all Home Safe clients are connected to longer term stabilization services.

Examples of longer-term housing stabilization services may include, but are not limited to, connections to In Home Support Services (IHSS) or connections to agencies that

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

provide home modification and accessibility devices to ensure seniors are able to safely remain in their home. Connections to behavioral health programs may also be critical housing stabilization services. Housing stabilization services should be offered to all participants whether they are looking to stabilize in their current housing to prevent homelessness, relocating to new housing, or transitioning to other permanent supportive housing programs through the local Continuum of Care or residential care placements for individuals in need of a higher level of care.

3. Housing Navigation

Housing navigation is a critical component of Home Safe as it assists participants in finding, applying, securing, and moving into interim and permanent housing as needed.

Examples of housing navigation that should be provided as part of the Home Safe program include, but are not limited to:

- landlord engagement, including outreach and appreciation events to recruit landlords to work with Home Safe clients;
- searching for housing based on client's housing preferences and mobility needs;
- building a resource of available units and matching clients to unit availability; according to their preferences for both interim and permanent housing options;
- assistance in completing housing applications;
- coordination with the local public housing authority and advocating for availability of affordable housing vouchers for Home Safe clients;
- ensuring quality of housing placements; and
- assistance in making higher-level care placements, such as Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs) or skilled nursing facilities, only when needed.

4. Housing Direct Financial Assistance

Direct financial assistance represents all costs paid out on behalf of the participant related to housing. Direct financial assistance should be maximized to ensure clients provided housing or prevented from entering homelessness as quickly as possible.

Examples of direct financial assistance includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- costs associated with rental assistance or mortgage payments (including shallow subsidies and enriched services funding to residential adult and senior care facilities)
- rental backpay and arrearages

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

- application fees
- security deposits
- first and last months' rent
- housing rehabilitation and modification costs
- interim housing including hotel/motel stays or master leased units
- emergency shelter
- one-time emergency basic needs provided pursuant to evidence-based practices in homeless assistance and prevention
- provision of basic housing items and resources
- transportation vouchers related to housing needs
- costs associated with moving or relocating

5. Connections to Longer-Term Supports:

Home Safe clients who require long term supports related to housing, such as supportive housing, should be referred to the local Continuum of Care for long term services to promote housing stability. Home Safe programs may serve clients through Home Safe in the interim, while awaiting services through the referral to the Continuum of Care, and Home Safe should work in close coordination with other systems of care or complimentary programs. Home Safe should also make referrals and coordinate services in order for clients to access physical and/or behavioral health assistance, as necessary and when appropriate.

C. Program Design and Staffing Considerations

In a mid-term program evaluation, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), recommended the creation of a dedicated Home Safe unit specialized in addressing homelessness or unstably housed clients that functions within the broader APS program. A Home Safe unit can be created "in-house" or by contracting with community partners to provide all or some of the core program components. In particular, it is recommended that grantees hire staff or contract with partners that are experts in housing navigation as this requires a specific skill set that is often different from a traditional case manager or social worker role. It is also recommended to have staff dedicated to data collection and integration, including assessing Home Safe participant outcomes after program exit. Refer to Attachment Three for information on flexible housing subsidy pools and strategic contracting, which may further assist with program efficiency.

UCSF also recommended hiring Home Safe-specific case managers that are distinct from, but function in close coordination with, broader APS protective and case management roles. If this is not feasible or strategic within a community to hire Home Safe-specific case managers, grantees should ensure that case managers understand

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

the unique timeline, goals, interventions, and requirements of serving APS clients that are also enrolled in Home Safe.

D. Assessment Tools

An assessment of each individual's housing needs, including a plan to assist the individual in meeting those needs, is required as per [WIC Section 15771](#). Previously, the PR-VI-SPDAT was the required assessment tool, unless another assessment tool was approved by CDSS. Grantees may now choose their own assessment tools, including using an existing tool or developing their own. If a grantee is newly implementing a Home Safe program, it is recommended that a pre-existing tool be used or adapted. This is especially true if the APS program is not currently working within the housing and homelessness system. CDSS will offer technical assistance to help grantees develop an assessment process.

Assessment tools that grantees have reported using include:

- Tool for Evaluating Risk, Interventions and Outcome ([TRIO](#))
- Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment ([BOCA](#))
- APS intake or other bio-psycho-social assessments that have already been completed, supplemented by housing-specific questions
- County-developed assessment tools that integrate needs related to housing and risk of homelessness
- [PR-VI-SPDAT](#) and [VI-SPDAT](#)

Assessment tools often fulfill a broad range of purposes beyond service matching. Consider these distinct goals when choosing an assessment tool or process. While it may be strategic to use an assessment tool to fulfill several of these needs, it may also be accomplished through separate tools or through delivering an assessment in phases.

- **Building a shared plan:** Assessments are an opportunity for case managers to partner with a client to understand their goals and preferences, including understanding what housing stability means to them, as well as build trust and rapport. Ensuring assessments are an appropriate length, that questions are worded in an easy-to-understand manner, and that the process is trauma-informed assists in building client trust and shared vision.
- **Prioritization:** If a grantee cannot accommodate all eligible clients, a prioritization framework will be needed. An assessment can be used to better target services to those who meet the prioritization criteria. It is recommended that grantees select a few critical factors to distinguish who should receive priority, such as acuity of medical needs or protective issues. These factors and the prioritization framework must be memorialized in writing and applied

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

consistently across the program. A lengthy questionnaire may not be needed for the sole purpose of prioritizing cases. Refer to Attachment Two for a summary of recommended criteria to use for prioritization.

- **Service matching:** Home Safe [WIC Section 15771](#) requires that an assessment tool be used to address an individual's housing needs and develop a plan to meet those needs. A more intensive assessment may be needed for the purposes of matching participants to the services needed to gain housing stability. Grantees may identify key questions to ask first and ask others at a subsequent time, especially if the participant is hesitant to engage. This should also be responsive to participant needs – a longer assessment may be appropriate for a person with more intensive care needs, while a shorter assessment may be sufficient for a participant receiving light touch assistance.
- **Data collection:** Many assessments feed into broader data collection for the purposes of HMIS or program reporting requirements. Grantees should make every effort to collect data for these purposes, but questions related solely to data reporting requirements do not need to be prioritized while a client is in crisis and initial intake. However, many of these data points are critical to understanding who the program serves and its effectiveness and are therefore important to track. For example, the Home Safe data requires collecting a participant's housing status 6 and 12 months after existing Home Safe. The intake and assessment process should factor in this need, such as informing clients and requesting consent to contact them for follow-ups.
- **Connectivity to other programs:** Given that Home Safe should work in coordination with health, housing, and homelessness programs, grantees should consider whether there are key questions that can help assess whether an individual is eligible or in need of other housing or health services.

Regardless of the assessment used, grantees should design and deliver assessment tools and processes according to the following guidelines. Assessments should:

- **Be applied consistently** across the program and should not rely on the social worker's individual determination of who to serve.
- Incorporate factors that are **evidence-based or promising best practices**, such as in targeting services to those most at risk of homelessness (refer to Attachment Two).
- Delivered and framed in an **easy-to-understand and trauma-informed manner** that centers the client's needs, including triaging the assessment or delivering in stages if the client is in crisis and/or hesitant to engage. Grantees are strongly encouraged to use data that may already have been collected to inform the assessment process and to avoid repetitive or traumatic questions.
- Adopt a **racial equity lens** and framework. The [Centre for Social Data Analytics](#) and the [Government Alliance for Race and Equity](#) recommends testing

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

assessment process against questions such as: Is the assessment tool equally predictive and useful for all racial groups? When applying the tools, what will this mean for a person? Who will gain and who will be burdened? What information has already been gathered about how the tool impacts people of color?

- **Reduce barriers to entry** and participation to the degree possible, versus being a tool to primarily screen people out.

CDSS will request information about assessment processes during program updates, with the primary purpose of information sharing across Home Safe programs and will aim to help grantees exchange resources on assessment tools on an ongoing basis.

E. Housing First

Home Safe must operate in accordance with Housing First. [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#).

Housing First means that individuals should be connected to housing or housing supports immediately without preconditions, services shall be voluntary, client choice shall be respected, and applicants shall not be rejected on the basis of income, past evictions, substance use, or any other behaviors that may indicate a lack of “housing readiness.”

CDSS has developed and previously requested that grantees complete a Housing First Self-Assessment to support grantees in assessing their adherence to and adoption of Housing First and identify areas for development. CDSS reserves the right to request that grantees complete a Housing First Self-Assessment throughout the technical assistance process. For example, this may be requested from grantees establishing new programs or when a Housing First practice requires improvement or refinement. This Housing First Self-Assessment is an important tool for Home Safe grantees to use through their continuous quality improvement practices and can be found under Attachment Three of [ACWDL dated August 10, 2020](#) and was developed using:

- The Housing First core components in [WIC Section 8255](#);
- The [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\) Housing First checklist](#);
- The [Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) Housing First Assessment Tool](#); and,
- The [Corporation for Supportive Housing \(CSH\) checklist](#).

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

F. Collaboration and Integration with the Local Health, Behavioral Health and Homeless Response System

CDSS requires Home Safe grantees to consult with their broader homelessness response systems as they develop and implement their Home Safe. This includes establishing or continuing to support meaningful partnerships with the local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC), tribal housing authorities, housing and homelessness agencies within incorporated cities, In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), aging organizations (Departments of Aging and Area Agencies on Aging), and other local housing service providers, as appropriate.

Grantees are also strongly encouraged to collaborate with other entities, criminal justice systems, medical institutions, emergency response systems, public benefit agencies, public guardians offices, legal aid organizations, reentry organizations, aging departments and area agencies on aging, advocates for clients, and other systems in order to make the best use of available funding and link clients to necessary services. Information on these collaborations will be requested within program updates. Grantees may use Home Safe funds to establish specific positions within the local Home Safe to support coordination of these systems.

G. Racial Equity

CDSS requires grantees to commit to addressing racial disproportionality for people experiencing homelessness and ensuring equitable provision of services for Black and Indigenous individuals and other people of color who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Black and Indigenous people experience homelessness at significantly higher rates than whites, largely due to long-standing historical and structural racism. In California, Black people account for 7 percent of the general population, but represent more than 31 percent of people experiencing homelessness. The disproportionality in homelessness is a by-product of systemic inequity – the racism continues to perpetuate disparities in critical areas that impact rates of homelessness, including poverty, segregation/rental housing discrimination, incarceration, and access to health care.

Grantees are encouraged to review demographic data of Home Safe and APS clients and understand how program demographics compare to the racial and ethnic makeup of low income and unhoused seniors in the community. This information can provide initial insight on racial inequity within programming but is the bare minimum and a starting point for addressing racial equity. Grantees should review the reports and resources below for examples of how housing and homelessness programs have incorporated racial equity into programming. Additionally, CDSS will provide technical assistance opportunities to help grantees address racial equity within Home Safe programming. Home Safe funds can be used to support efforts such as a racial equity analysis or plan.

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

Counties and tribes are encouraged to review the following reports and resources related to racial equity:

Reports

- [Racial Inequalities in Homelessness, by the Numbers](#) - National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)
- [Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities \(SPARC\) Phase One Study Findings](#) - Center for Social Innovation
- [A Brief Timeline of Race and Homelessness in America](#) - Community Solutions
- [Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness](#) - Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Resources

- [Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity](#) - Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)
- [Equity-Based Decision-Making Framework](#) - National Innovative Service
- [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#) - Housing Equity Framework
- [Advancing Racial Equity through Assessments and Prioritization](#) - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

II. PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Technical Assistance

Training and technical assistance (TA) will continue to be offered by CDSS to help grantees establish, develop, and improve their programs and to facilitate information-sharing across Home Safe. TA and training opportunities include one-on-one calls, training as part of regional or topic-specific cohorts, state-wide learning sessions, in person or virtual learning forums, strategy meetings, process mapping, case conferencing, etc. CDSS may designate specific TA or training as mandatory, including for specific staff, such as program leads.

TA and training topics may include strategies for strengthening outreach, case management, housing navigation, housing assistance, collaboration with CoCs, assessment and intake process development, as well as local workforce development strategies to hire staff to implement Home Safe, streamlining administrative efficiencies, advancing equity on a systems level, and improving collaboration with the local homelessness network. TA and training may be conducted by CDSS or a technical assistance contractor. Programs may utilize Home Safe funds to provide program-

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

specific training in areas identified by the grantee or CDSS to support continuous quality improvement.

Based on feedback from current grantees, CDSS plans to establish cross-program opportunities for TA engagement. For example, CDSS will host joint office hours to address questions across the suite of CDSS housing and homeless programs, rather than exclusively program specific meetings. Grantees are welcome and encouraged to provide feedback to CDSS on how we can structure meetings that address the needs of grantees and service providers operating the programs. Please send feedback to housing@dss.ca.gov.

B. Data Reporting and Integration

Data collection, progress monitoring, and outcome reporting are essential and mandatory elements of Home Safe. Data needs should be considered when deciding on staffing, training, and program design. Building successful a data system also requires coordination and relationship building with HMIS administrators, service providers, and other entities that collect, submit, use, create, process, or require program data. In particular, the HSAPS 19 requires that grantees report on an individual's housing status 6 and 12 months after exiting Home Safe. Incorporating this requirement into program design and staffing considerations is strongly recommended. Grantees using LEAPS for APS and Home Safe reporting are also encouraged to dedicate staff and funding to coordinate this process.

Grantees are required to report complete individual level and aggregate data via the HSAPS 19 report which is to be submitted via the [Secure Automated File Exchange \(SAFE\) website](#). Additional instructions on the HSAPS19 will be provided in future guidance. Applicants may request additional information about Home Safe data reporting requirements by emailing housing@dss.ca.gov.

Effective January 1, 2022, the HSAPS 19 will be due on a **quarterly basis**. The report will be submitted on the 1st working day of the second month following the end of the quarter, as listed below:

- January – March data (Q3) is due May 2, 2022
- April – June data (Q4) is due August 1, 2022
- July – September data (Q1) is due November 1, 2022
- October – December data (Q2) is due February 1, 2023

Additionally, it is required that Home safe participants be entered into HMIS. If the county or tribe does not already have access to HMIS, it may be possible to achieve access via a housing partner within the community. If a county or tribe is not familiar

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

with HMIS, CDSS encourages grantees to reach out to the local CoC or HMIS administrator to determine how Home Safe participants can be entered into HMIS.

CDSS recommends that counties and tribes collect both the Universal Data Elements (UDEs, items 3.01-3.917) and the Common Data Elements (CDEs, items 4.02-4.20 and W5) in their HMIS for all new Home Safe participants that are enrolled. When collecting CDEs, please follow guidance provided by HUD's [HMIS Data Standards Manual \(Section Four\)](#). Home Safe grantees should follow U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidance on HMIS project set-up and collect the CDEs that are appropriate for the Home Safe project. As a reminder, grantees may use Home Safe funds to modify their local HMIS in order to capture all of the required Home Safe data elements.

Grantees must also participate in activities related to any formal Home Safe evaluation, such as submitting program data, HMIS data, conducting data reviews and cleaning, or participating in interviews and focus groups. Grantees are reminded that they may use Home Safe funds to support these requirements related to and in support of a formal evaluation.

C. Program Planning and Update Requirements

As described in the main body of this ACWDL, CDSS is providing counties and tribes the opportunity to accept Noncompetitive Allocations. Therefore, as a condition of receiving these funds, grantees will be required to provide regular program updates to demonstrate use of program funds consistent with program guidance and requirements. CDSS will request a program update using a state-provided template to be distributed six months after the FY 2021-22 funds are accepted and annually thereafter.

D. Program Performance and Evaluation

Grantees are expected to regularly measure, monitor, and communicate program impact and performance. Establishing clear targets and collecting data to measure progress is part of this process. For Home Safe, programs should consistently track progress on metrics such as:

- Number of participants enrolled
- Number of individuals housed at program exit
- Number of individuals housed six months and one year after program exit

There are other indicators that may be helpful in evaluating program performance and impact, such as length of time between referral and enrollment, between enrollment and placement in interim housing, or number of participants housed and unhoused at program enrollment. Client stories and other qualitative information can also

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

communicate impact, though should be shared with client consent, dignity, and privacy in highest priority. CDSS will provide further guidance, including through technical assistance, on how to set and monitor program performance indicators.

CDSS will conduct ongoing monitoring of program performance using the data, claiming information, and program updates submitted by grantees. Consistent with evidence-based programming, CDSS aims to utilize outcomes data to inform future funding. Therefore, grantees are encouraged to use data to conduct their own program management, oversight, and continuous quality improvement.

E. Program Compliance

Should CDSS become aware that a grantee is not operating Home Safe consistent with statutory requirements or formal guidance issued by CDSS, the Department will notify the grantee that they shall amend their program within a specified timeline in order to come into compliance. CDSS will provide technical assistance to support grantees and to ensure that programs are operated consistent with evidence-based practices and may request more regular program updates to reflect program compliance.

Examples of non-compliance may include, but are not limited to, failing to offer housing-related supports and services as described in [WIC Section 15771](#), or violating Housing First requirements as described in [WIC Section 8255](#) and [8256](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#).

CDSS acknowledges that program goals and targets including budgeting may be subject to change given the dynamic nature of homeless assistance and housing supports. If a grantee is not able to meet the target of individuals to serve or is not maximizing direct financial assistance, CDSS will offer additional technical assistance to the grantee to help achieve best or promising practices in these areas.

Grantees must notify CDSS in writing at least 30 days in advance of any temporary or permanent interruption or end to Home Safe services and operations for any reason, including fully spending their allocation.

III. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT HOME SAFE CLIENTS

The [FY 2021-22 California State Budget](#) also includes investments in programs across the state that may assist Home Safe clients. For more information on funding sources to leverage in support of Home Safe, please visit the [Homeless Coordination and Financing Council website](#) and reference the [Putting the Funding Pieces Together: Guide to Strategic Uses of New and Recent State and Federal Funds to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) document. Grantees are also encouraged to leverage expanded

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

funding, services, and staff made available to other programs within the local Department of Social Services, such as the CalWORKs Housing Support Program, Bringing Families Home, and the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP). Additional resources made available within the FY 2021-21 budget that may support Home Safe clients are listed below, for reference.

A. Housing Related Resources to Support Seniors and Adults with Disabilities

SSP/CAPI Grant Increases

The Budget includes \$291.3 million General Fund in FY 2021-22 and ongoing to increase grants for [State Supplementary Payment](#) (SSP), Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, and California Veterans Cash Benefits. Future SSP grant increases will be subject to an appropriation. Home Safe grantees should monitor these upcoming changes to benefit amounts and plan with participants accordingly, including potential impacts to their monthly budget or ability to afford housing and other needs.

Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program

The Budget includes \$755.7 million in FY 2021-22, \$1.4 billion in FY 2022-23, and \$220 million in FY 2023-24 for competitive grants to qualified entities to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate real estate assets or to invest in mobile crisis infrastructure to expand the community continuum of behavioral health treatment resources. Grantees should collaborate with the local behavioral health continuum to understand locally available resources for Home Safe participants.

Project Roomkey and Rehousing Strategy

The Budget includes \$142.5 million in one-time General Fund for FY 2021-22 was allocated through [ACWDL dated July 29, 2021](#) for continued operation of non-congregate shelter and support of re-housing activities for Project Roomkey participants. Grantees should continue to coordinate closely with Project Roomkey programs to assess potential eligibility for Home Safe and assist in re-housing efforts.

Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP)

The Budget includes \$175.0 million was allocated for FY 2021-22 through ACWDL dated September 13, 2021 for all 58 counties and two continuing tribes. HDAP provides housing supports and disability benefit application assistance and advocacy to people likely eligible for disability benefits and experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. If a Home Safe participant requires disability benefits advocacy to apply

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

for or increase benefit amounts (such as SSI, SSDI, or CAPI), case managers should consider referring the individual to HDAP.

Community Care Expansion (CCE) Program

The Budget includes \$805.0 million in FY 2021-22 for the construction, acquisition and/or rehabilitation of projects to preserve or expand adult and senior care facilities to serve people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless. CDSS will be managing the establishment of this program over the course of the next year and will provide more information on how Home Safe participants may be able to access CCE.

Homekey

The Budget includes \$2.75 billion for Homekey administered through the California Department of Housing and Urban Development, will further expand the portfolio of housing by supporting the acquisition and conversion of properties into affordable and supportive housing or interim housing. Grantees should collaborate with their CoC to identify local Homekey operators and identify potential areas of collaboration, such as unit set asides for Home Safe participants. Information regarding [Homekey Notice of Funding Availability](#) is on the Homekey website.

Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program (HHAP)

The Budget includes \$2.0 billion one-time General Fund to the [Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council](#) (HCFC) to assist counties, Continuums of Care, and large cities with addressing homelessness in their communities.

Supportive Services for Formerly Homeless Veterans

The Budget includes \$25.0 million one-time General Fund for the [California Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to administer a competitive grant program to support aging veterans and veterans with disabilities who have experienced chronic homelessness. This program will provide a higher level of on-site supportive services, such as in-home support to help with habitability, peer specialists to encourage veterans to engage in mental health care, and geriatric social workers to identify behavioral issues related to early onset dementia or similar cognitive issues. This program will support residents in permanent supportive housing projects throughout California, primarily projects supported by [Housing and Urban Development–Veterans Administration Supportive Housing](#) (HUD VASH).

ATTACHMENT ONE: OVERVIEW OF HOME SAFE AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

Older Adult Recovery and Resiliency

The Budget includes \$106 million General Fund, available over three years through the [California Department of Aging](#), to strengthen older adults' recovery and resilience from isolation and health impacts caused by the pandemic. This investment will increase service levels of existing programs based on local need including: Senior Nutrition, Senior Legal Aid, Home Modifications and Fall Prevention, Behavioral Health Line, Senior Digital Connections, Family Caregiver Support, Senior Employment Opportunities, Elder Abuse Prevention, and Aging and Disability Resource Connection.

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Initiative

The Budget includes \$1.6 billion (\$650.7 million General Fund) in FY 2021-22 for the [CalAIM](#) initiative. The cost increases in General Fund to \$1.5 billion (\$812.5 million General Fund) by 2023-24 and decreases to \$900 million (\$480 million General Fund) in 2024-25 and ongoing.

Assisted Living Waiver

The Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) is a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver that was created by legislation that directed the [California Department of Health Care Services \(DHCS\)](#) to develop and implement the project to test the efficacy of assisted living as a Medi-Cal benefit.

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

Home Safe has the ability to serve participants across a wide continuum of need, especially given the program expansion and updated guidance for this fiscal year. As per WIC Section 15770, programs may serve eligible clients that are at risk of homelessness and/or homeless, including those who are unsheltered or chronically homeless. Program designs will differ depending on the needs of participants that Home Safe aims to serve. This attachment provides guidelines on serving both clients at risk of homelessness as well as those who are currently experiencing homelessness. This document also outlines the importance of ensuring the community understands that Home Safe is an important part of the broader homeless response system while also recognizing Home Safe is not the only solution to support seniors and adults with disabilities experiencing a housing crisis.

Grantees are encouraged to review [Disaster Response Rehousing](#) for a collection of resources that show how prevention, diversion, and problem solving fit within a broader homelessness response system in the wake of COVID-19 or other disasters.

I. SECTION ONE: INTEGRATION WITHIN THE HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM OF CARE

Home Safe programs should be intentionally designed to address unmet needs for seniors and adults with disabilities who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This requires understanding what need looks like within a community, as well as knowing what resources are already available locally to meet those needs. Grantees should consult their local CoC for information on need as well review data on APS case load (including APS clients with housing needs), local point in time counts, local HMIS data, [Homeless Data Integration System](#) data, census data on low-income seniors, etc. Housing and homelessness providers, hospitals and medical institutions, legal aid providers, advocacy organizations, and organizations serving seniors (such as senior councils, senior centers, Area Agency on Aging, and MDT partners) can also provide insights on unmet housing needs for seniors and adults with disabilities.

All Home Safe grantees are required to coordinate with the broader local homelessness response system, including the local homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC). Collaboration with the local homeless response system should occur early in the program planning stages and remain ongoing throughout the course of program implementation. New grantees should meet with the CoC and other key actors in the homelessness system of care as soon as possible.

In addition to referring participants in need of longer-term services to the CoC, a strong and ongoing collaboration will also help homelessness and housing providers understand APS and Home Safe mandates and opportunities. It is also important to ensure that the homeless response system of care understands the APS program and

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

the opportunities and constraints of the Home Safe program. This includes understanding local rules regarding APS eligibility or protocols for opening cases for investigation. For this reason, successful collaboration between Home Safe and the CoC requires sharing information about APS to housing and homelessness providers on an ongoing basis.

In addition to referring participants in need of longer-term services to the CoC, a strong and ongoing collaboration will also help homelessness and housing providers understand APS and Home Safe mandates and opportunities. Home Safe presents an opportunity for greater systems collaboration to ensure the homeless system of care accounts for the unique needs of seniors and adults with disabilities, an area in which local APS programs have a deep understanding. Not only does Home Safe bring expertise in the unique needs of seniors but it will also be important to share local rules regarding APS eligibility or protocols for opening cases for investigation. Home Safe funds can be used to facilitate this collaboration and programs are encouraged to consider creating positions within the Home Safe program for this specific purpose.

Examples of collaboration between Home Safe and the CoC may include:

- Participating in CoC meetings or regularly meet with CoC staff and leadership;
- Sending Home Safe/APS representatives to multi-disciplinary team meetings with the CoC or inviting CoC representatives to APS MDT meetings;
- Strategizing with CoC leadership on understanding the gaps in services for older and dependent adults and how the CoC can better serve older and dependent adults;
- Providing regular information sessions on APS and Home Safe services, eligibility, and referral process;
- Helping the CoC develop intake and assessment questions to better identify individuals that may be eligible for Home Safe or APS.

Home grantees are encouraged to speak to their local [Continuum of Care contact](#) to learn more about their local system.

Refer to the below resources for more information on integration within the broader homelessness system of care:

- [Putting the Funding Pieces Together - Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council \(HCFC\)](#)
 - Guide to understand state and federal resources available for homelessness assistance and prevention.
- [What is a Continuum of Care?](#) - NAEH
 - Overview of the purpose, goals, and structure of a CoC.
- [Local CoC Contact Information](#) - HCFC

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

- Contact information for all CoCs in California
- [Disaster Response Rehousing](#) - HUD
 - Collection of resources that show how prevention, diversion, and problem solving fit within a broader homelessness response system in the wake of COVID-19 or other disasters.

II. SECTION TWO: PRINCIPLES AND RESOURCES FOR PREVENTION SERVICES

Individuals or families at risk of homelessness are those most likely to enter homelessness in the absence of assistance. Individuals and families are at greater risk of homelessness when they have a previous incidence of homelessness, recent exits from institutional settings, children under two years of age, doubled-up households or not being a leaseholder, recent emergency room use, lack of health insurance, and involvement in the criminal justice and foster care systems. Households with income below 30 percent or 50 percent of [Area Median Income](#) who also face a crisis, such as domestic violence, health problems, or loss of housing, may also be at increased risk of homelessness.

Preventative services and assistance are varied and can include any preventative measure that will save a tenancy, help individuals and families regain stability in their current housing, or move and achieve stability in a new housing location. This may include rental or utility arrears, late fee payments, first month's rent and/or security deposits, landlord mediation, repairs, habitability/accessibility improvements, and housing navigation.

While homelessness prevention refers to a broad category of services, research shows that homelessness prevention is more targeted the closer it is offered to actual homelessness and for the people who are at immediate risk. However, APS clients seeking housing assistance are likely already more vulnerable to homelessness than the general population. Given that Home Safe serves individuals involved in APS or the process of APS intake, Home Safe by design is targeting services to those at heightened risk of homelessness.

If further prioritization is required for prevention clients, CDSS recommends that priority is given to those who have previously been homeless, those with the greatest medical severity or behavioral health need, greatest severity of APS protective issues, and current or previous involvement in the criminal justice systems. These factors and the prioritization framework must be memorialized in writing and applied consistently across the program. Refer to Attachment One for considerations on using assessment tools for prioritization purposes.

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

A. Eviction Prevention

Eviction prevention is distinct from homelessness prevention in that it is narrowly targeted to only those households who are at risk of homelessness due to a potential eviction. Some households in receipt of an eviction notice may not be at risk of becoming homeless because they are able to find and secure subsequent permanent housing. Homelessness prevention efforts often include eviction prevention strategies such as short term or one-time financial assistance payments, including payment of back rent, but may also offer more substantial case management or other supportive services.

Eviction prevention strategies for CDSS programs, including Home Safe, during COVID-19 are outlined in [ACWDL dated January 14, 2021](#), and information on requirements for Home Safe to leverage federal and state rent relief resources is outlined below.

B. Emergency Rental Assistance Program/California COVID-19 Rental Relief Funds

Over \$4.6 billion in funding has been made available to California under the US Department of the Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance Program ([ERAP](#)). The ERAP funds, which were made available to states, local governments, and tribes, can assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities. ERAP funds administered by the State of California are referred to as the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Program.

For Home Safe participants who are behind on rent, grantees should assist participants with accessing ERAP funds before using Home Safe funds to pay back rent. Note: this requirement is not intended to impact *eligibility* for Home Safe, but is rather a requirement to utilize ERAP funds for rental assistance before Home Safe funds are used, when available, and help clients in accessing these funds. Application for ERAP extends important and critical eviction prevention protections; therefore, it is very important that counties and tribes continue to assist clients with applying for ERAP rather than using Home Safe funds to mitigate risk of eviction.

Rent relief under ERAP covers up to 100 percent of unpaid back rent as well as future rent and expenses that a tenant is unable to pay due to COVID-19 impacts. This might include loss of job or reduction in hours, loss of transportation to and from jobs, loss of childcare preventing regular work, increased healthcare or other costs, and other impacts to daily life that result in reduced or no income or increased costs. Rental relief applications can be submitted by landlords, renters, or both. However, a renter must participate for relief funds to be received.

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

The below excerpt from [Justice in Aging Issue Brief](#) outlines the relevance of ERAP for older adults and adults with disabilities: *“Older renters, people with disabilities, and others living on fixed incomes can qualify for ERAP assistance by demonstrating that they have experienced significant costs or other financial hardship during or due to—directly or indirectly—the pandemic, which should be liberally interpreted. Consider for example, the older renter who:*

- *Was working part-time pre-pandemic and was laid off, had their hours reduced, or had to leave their job;*
- *Lives in a household where someone else in the household experienced a loss of income or significant new expenses;*
- *Lost access to free food, meals, or free medical clinics; or*
- *Had additional expenses to get food/medication delivered or to avoid using public transit.”*

Home Safe participants may also benefit from more in-depth application assistance offered through the Local Partner Network (LPN). These partners can meet with participants at their home or another site to walk them through the process, assist with documentation and uploads, and add designees to their account to enable a third-party to help them complete the application. **To access an LPN appointment call (833) 687-0967.** This phone line is open to the public and can be accessed by participants or case workers. Home Safe funds may be used to provide further support to Home Safe clients in navigating this assistance and it is recommended that case workers help facilitate the process alongside the Home Safe participant.

Reference the following resources to learn more and begin an application:

- Visit the [COVID-19 Rental Relief Program website](#) for more information on the program or to begin an application.
- **Call (833) 430-2122** for questions about the program and eligibility.
- **Call (833) 687-0967** for assistance in a language besides English, or to receive more in-depth assistance in the application process through an LPN.
- For informational brochures on the COVID-19 Rental Relief Program, please visit the [CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Toolkit dropbox](#).
- Review the [Justice in Aging Issue Brief](#) on rent relief for older adults for guidance on how the eligibility criteria might apply to older adults.

C. Prevention Resources

For more information on implementing equitable homelessness prevention activities, see the below resources:

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

- [Framework for Homelessness Prevention](#) – HUD
 - Overview of types of prevention programs and strategies, target population, and considerations for COVID-19.
- [Homeless System Response: Prevention to Promote Equity](#) – HUD
 - Guide to ensuring equitable access and culturally responsive prevention strategies and monitoring outcomes.
- [Homeless System Response: Effective and Efficient Prevention Programs](#) – HUD
 - Summary of strategies utilized in innovative homelessness prevention programs and interventions in multiple states
- [Homeless System Response: How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program During COVID-19](#) – HUD
 - Recommended operational steps for planning, developing, implementing, and administering effective homelessness prevention strategies
- [Prevent Homelessness](#) – United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
 - Overview of crisis intervention and mitigation strategies aimed at reducing the risk of homelessness
- [A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention](#) – Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
 - Overview of where prevention fits into broader housing and homelessness assistance, including how the Canadian housing and homelessness system is designed.
- [Homelessness Prevention: A Review of the Literature](#) – Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness
 - Overview of research on what types of interventions are most effective in preventing homelessness, key factors in predicting homelessness, and overview of existing screening models.
- [Preventing Homelessness: Evidence-Based Methods to Screen Adults and Families at Risk of Homelessness in Los Angeles](#) – California Policy Lab
 - Recommendations from the California Policy Lab on prevention targeting tools, including risk factors that may indicate risk of homelessness, modifications to make tools more user-friendly, and modifications that could be made for adults and families.
- [Housing Problem Solving in Practice](#) – HUD
 - Community examples of housing problem solving strategies to assist in diversion, progressive engagement, and prevention.

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

III. SECTION THREE: PRINCIPLES AND RESOURCES FOR SERVING SENIORS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A. Background

During the initial Home Safe pilot, CDSS specified that grantees should focus primarily on homelessness prevention and guidance limited Home Safe services to short term supports. Now, given the expanded one-time funds, this limitation is no longer necessary. Grantees are encouraged to expand their programs to serve all APS clients with needs for housing supports including APS clients who are experiencing homelessness and chronic homelessness. Consistent with WIC Section 15771(c), Home Safe grantees must utilize evidence-based practices in homeless assistance and prevention, including housing risk screening and assessments, housing first, rapid rehousing, and supportive housing.

Programs should provide housing related assistance and case management until housing stability is reached or a longer-term permanent housing connection is made, which will vary depending on the participant's needs. Given the short-term nature of APS intervention, Home Safe programs offering longer term assistance are encouraged to use contracted partners to continue to provide Home Safe housing related assistance once an APS case closes or ensure the participant is transitioned to another housing support program within the community. Refer to Attachment Three for additional information on the use of the flexible housing subsidy pool.

B. Serving APS Clients Experiencing Homelessness

Home Safe can play an important role in addressing homelessness among seniors and adults with disabilities, including those that are chronically homeless within the APS caseload.

APS programs have existing partnerships that can be leveraged in order to successfully expand their Home Safe program in this way. For example, APS programs regularly collaborate with hospital social workers, home health agencies, senior centers with lists of vetted vendors, and long-term case management programs to create safety nets. These existing service provider networks utilized by APS case managers can support serving APS clients experiencing homelessness.

However, it is important to be aware that Home Safe programs that serve APS clients currently experiencing homelessness, including chronic homelessness, may require different outreach, intake, and prioritization processes than those used within the pilot which focused primarily on prevention services. Different partners, services, and interventions are also likely to be required. For example, programs might focus more on connecting clients to affordable housing vouchers, permanent supportive housing, and

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

when necessary, assisted living facilities or skilled nursing facilities. Grantees are encouraged to use principles of progressive engagement to ensure that resources are appropriately directed to client needs.

Communities with high rates of seniors experiencing homelessness are especially encouraged to expand services to this population to serve APS clients or in those in the process of APS intake who are sheltered through programs such as Project Roomkey, Homekey, HDAP or others aimed to serve seniors of adults with disabilities experiencing homelessness. For example, Home Safe programs can work with Project Roomkey participants who are APS clients to provide stabilizing services and collaborate with a case manager to address barriers to long-term housing stability. Additionally, Home Safe can connect participants in need of SSI, SSDI, and other disability benefits to the HDAP program for assistance gathering and submitting applications, navigating appeals processes, or adjusting benefit amounts.

C. Resources

The below resources provide a starting point for grantees to understand homelessness among seniors and people with disabilities. CDSS is also committed to offering technical assistance to help grantees expand Home Safe services to unhoused seniors and adults with disabilities that meet the eligibility criteria.

- [Growing Problem of Older Adult Homelessness](#) – Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University
 - Overview of data and trends regarding senior homelessness in the United States, including key factors behind the growing number of older unhoused adults. The full report is entitled [Housing America's Older Adults 2019](#).
- [Homelessness Among Older Adults: An Emerging Crisis](#) – American Society on Aging
 - Overview of research by Dr. Margot Kushel on the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to homelessness among older adults.
- [The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness](#) - Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy
 - Detailed report summarizing research in New York City, Los Angeles, and Boston regarding aging homelessness. Analyzes different levels of service need among older adults experiencing homelessness and implications for targeting services.

ATTACHMENT TWO: RESOURCES FOR SERVING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS A CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

- [Evidence-based Service Delivery](#) – HUD
 - Outline of strategies that have been rigorously and scientifically evaluated practices such as critical time intervention, motivational interviewing, and intensive case management.
- [Planning a Housing Surge to Accelerate Rehousing Efforts in Response to COVID-19](#) - HUD
 - In-depth guide on housing surge strategies, or concentrated and time-limited community efforts to house a large number of people in a short time frame. HUD has a guide for [Special Considerations in Targeting Housing Surges to People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness](#).
- [Effective Behavioral Health Crisis Care for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness](#) – Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC)
 - Brief outlining considerations in designing and implementing behavioral health crisis care around the specific needs of those experiencing homelessness.

ATTACHMENT THREE: HOME SAFE FISCAL AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

I. BUDGET GUIDELINES

Home Safe grantees are expected to offer housing related case management, housing navigation, housing stabilization, and housing related direct financial assistance to all Home Safe clients when relevant. Grantees must minimize administrative costs while maximizing direct services and housing related financial assistance. Grantees must budget the program appropriately in order to ensure every client has access to adequate housing assistance and stabilization services.

The budget categories are defined as follows:

- **Administrative costs** may include, but are not limited to, program administrative staff (including program supervision and data tracking staff), general administration and costs necessary for the proper administration of the program, data tracking including HMIS licenses, overhead, and program development activities.
- **Direct program service costs** include case management staff, housing navigation staff, and other program staff or operational costs not included within administrative costs.
- **Direct financial assistance to support housing** represents all housing related costs paid out on behalf of the participant. This includes costs associated with rental assistance, application fees, security deposits, first and last months' rent, housing rehabilitation and modification costs, interim shelter assistance, move-in costs, landlord incentives, etc.

Grantees will be asked to provide updates on spending for administrative costs, direct program service costs, and direct financial assistance during required program updates. If grantees are not maximizing direct financial assistance or minimizing administrative costs, grantees will be asked to provide an explanation within their program update template, including plans to increase spending on direct financial assistance. CDSS will offer additional technical assistance to the grantee to help achieve best or promising practices in these areas.

II. FLEXIBLE CONTRACTING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES

Given that multiple rounds of funding may occur within a fiscal year or the grant period, CDSS strongly encourages grantees to make contracts, Memorandums of Understanding, and other agreements with implementing partners as flexible and easy to amend as possible. Agreements may need to be altered to update award amounts, spending timeframes, and eligible activities (such as incorporating longer term homeless assistance services). Prioritizing flexibility will facilitate continued program

ATTACHMENT THREE: HOME SAFE FISCAL AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

operations while awaiting staggered funding, especially when transitioning to a new fiscal year and awaiting the finalization of the statewide program budget.

Grantees are strongly encouraged to consider strategic agreements with community partners, such as contracting with one implementing partner to deliver housing navigation across several programs with similar housing navigation needs. For example, grantees may utilize a portion of their Home Safe allocation in coordination with a portion of their CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), Bringing Families Home, Project Roomkey, Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP), or other local, state, or federally funded program awards to provide housing navigation for multiple programs across the community.

Similarly, grantees should strongly consider developing a flexible housing subsidy pool, in which dedicated funds from various housing programs are centralized for planning purposes into a single source to meet a common administrative purpose amongst the programs. On a client services level, **costs would be attributable to the specific client and program of which they are a participant and would be claimed accordingly**. Flexible subsidy pools or braiding of funds allow for greater economies of scale while reducing cross program competition for housing within a community.

For more information on flexible housing subsidy pools, reference:

- [Flexible Subsidy Housing Pools Fundamentals](#) – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- [History and Takeaways from Los Angeles County Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool](#) – The Hilton Foundation

III. CLAIMING AND MATCH INSTRUCTIONS

At this time, counties should continue to claim all Home Safe expenditures, for themselves and on behalf of any tribal partners, to Home Safe Program Code 0766 (Home Safe) through the County Expense Claim Reporting Information System. Costs claimed in excess of a county's Home Safe allocation will be shifted to 100 percent county only funds via State Use Only code 0767 (Home Safe – Overmatch). For additional claiming instructions, please refer to [CFL No. 19/20-93](#) and [CFL No. 18/19-47](#).

Note: Claiming instructions and match guidelines will be updated to accommodate both the newer noncompetitive funding (which has no match requirement) and the Home Safe funding that was re-appropriated as part of the Budget Act of 2021 (which maintains its match requirement).

ATTACHMENT FOUR: HOME SAFE FY 2021-22 NONCOMPETITIVE ALLOCATION AMOUNTS

The below table contains the Noncompetitive Allocation amounts for all 58 counties. More information on the allocation methodology is contained in the “FY 2021-22 Budget Updates and Use of Funds” section of the main letter of this ACWDL. To accept the allocations, counties must sign and return the Director’s Certification in Attachment Five **by Friday December 3, 2021**. The funding process for Tribal Governments interested in establishing a new Home Safe will be provided under separate cover.

County	Allocation
Alameda	\$3,321,116
Alpine	\$250,000
Amador	\$250,000
Butte	\$629,264
Calaveras	\$250,000
Colusa	\$250,000
Contra Costa	\$1,382,181
Del Norte	\$250,000
El Dorado	\$394,567
Fresno	\$1,514,515
Glenn	\$250,000
Humboldt	\$641,136
Imperial	\$524,363
Inyo	\$250,000
Kern	\$1,201,128
Kings	\$250,000
Lake	\$250,000
Lassen	\$250,000
Los Angeles	\$26,803,564
Madera	\$291,371
Marin	\$519,503
Mariposa	\$250,000
Mendocino	\$344,368
Merced	\$747,080
Modoc	\$250,000
Mono	\$250,000
Monterey	\$918,556
Napa	\$260,558
Nevada	\$250,000
Orange	\$4,745,914
Placer	\$642,394

ATTACHMENT FOUR: HOME SAFE FY 2021-22 NONCOMPETITIVE ALLOCATION AMOUNTS

County	Allocation
Plumas	\$250,000
Riverside	\$3,658,142
Sacramento	\$2,893,499
San Benito	\$250,000
San Bernardino	\$3,112,629
San Diego*	\$4,863,726
San Francisco	\$3,421,812
San Joaquin	\$1,036,264
San Luis Obispo	\$702,162
San Mateo	\$897,589
Santa Barbara	\$1,015,524
Santa Clara	\$3,619,486
Santa Cruz	\$892,083
Shasta	\$612,824
Sierra	\$250,000
Siskiyou	\$250,000
Solano	\$704,172
Sonoma	\$1,341,275
Stanislaus	\$1,003,661
Sutter	\$250,000
Tehama	\$250,000
Trinity	\$250,000
Tulare	\$650,890
Tuolumne	\$250,000
Ventura	\$1,440,582
Yolo	\$339,510
Yuba	\$287,592
TOTAL	\$82,875,000

ATTACHMENT FIVE: FY 2021-22 HOME SAFE DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

County Welfare Directors wishing to accept the funds made available to their county as listed in Attachment Four shall complete and return this Director's Certification to housing@dss.ca.gov by **Friday December 3, 2021**. Counties and tribes interested in establishing regional programs should refer to Attachment Six for additional information.

By accepting these funds and signing the certification below, the County Welfare Director agrees to the funding terms and conditions outlined within this letter.

I. SECTION ONE: CONTACT INFORMATION *(All grantees complete section a through c below):*

a) Name of County: _____

b) Name of contact person and title:

c) Contact information (phone and email):

II. SECTION TWO: FUNDING AMOUNT AND PROGRAM TARGETS *(All grantees complete Section a through e below)*

Noncompetitive Allocation: A county may accept the full amount identified within Attachment Four or a portion of these funds. Select one of the following:

The county hereby:

- Accepts the total allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four
 - o Confirm the amount accepted: \$ _____
- Accepts the total allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four AND accept additional funds (if available) beyond current allocation level
 - o Accept any amount of additional funds (no limit)
 - o Accept additional funds for a total of up to: \$ _____
- Accepts only a portion of the allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four.
 - o Specify amount accepted: \$ _____

Expected Clients to Serve: Grantees should assess community need, program capacity, and available resources to estimate the total unduplicated number of new and continuing Home Safe participants expected to be served between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2024 with the funds accepted through the Noncompetitive Allocation above. Grantees should estimate the expected number of clients served to the best of their ability. However, these projections are for the purposes of initial program scoping and CDSS expects that grantees will refine these numbers at a later date.

ATTACHMENT FIVE: FY 2021-22 HOME SAFE DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

Complete all of the following:

- i. Estimated number of individuals **experiencing homelessness** to receive Home Safe services: _____
- ii. Estimated number of individuals **at risk of homelessness** to receive Home Safe homelessness prevention services: _____
- iii. Estimated **TOTAL** number of individuals to serve in Home Safe:

III. SECTION THREE: COLLABORATION AND DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION OF FUNDING TERMS *(All grantees complete Section a and b below)*

Collaboration: Home Safe grantees must inform the local housing, homelessness, health, and social service networks of the following information:

- Allocation made available to the grantee;
- Final award amount accepted by grantee;
- Home Safe program benefits and eligibility (e.g., Attachment One); and,
- Home Safe program requirements as it relates to collaboration with the Continuum of Care (CoC), CES, and HMIS (e.g., Attachment One).

Relevant agencies and organizations may include the CoC, housing agencies of incorporated cities, health services, behavioral health agencies, public housing authorities, tribal agencies, emergency response, legal aid, aging departments and councils, and any other local partners that will be key to local collaboration.

- A copy of the letter(s) or comparable material sent to relevant partner agencies within the community and list of recipients is attached.** The county understands that this is a requirement to accept the Noncompetitive Allocation.

Conditions of Funding

I, County Welfare Director of [insert name of county], certify that I will:

- 1) Operate a Home Safe consistent with relevant laws, regulations, program guidance, and evidence-based practices, including but not limited to:
 - a) [WIC Sections 5770-15771](#)
 - b) All County Letters or similar instruction, including [ACWDL dated October 22, 2018](#)
 - c) Housing First requirements as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#)
 - d) Evidence-based practices in homeless assistance and homeless prevention

ATTACHMENT FIVE: FY 2021-22 HOME SAFE DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

- 2) Actively collaborate with local, state, and federal housing, homelessness and health systems in order to make best use of available funding and link clients to necessary services. I understand that information on these collaborations will be requested within program updates. These collaborating entities may include but are not limited to:
 - a) Continuums of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems
 - b) Behavioral health systems
 - c) Medical institutions and emergency response systems
 - d) Housing authorities
 - e) Public benefit agencies
 - f) Legal aid providers
- 3) Collect, track, report and measure relevant program outcomes and engage in continuous data quality improvement, such as:
 - a) Enter clients into HMIS.
 - b) Submit Home Safe related program reports, including but not limited to the HSAPS 19, as specified by CDSS through an ACL or similar instruction.
 - c) Participate in formal evaluation efforts which may include executing data sharing agreements with the HMIS administrator.
 - d) Set program targets and milestones and report to CDSS on progress at least annually or upon request from CDSS.
- 4) Engage in training, technical assistance, and continuous quality improvement, including but not limited to:
 - a) Program leads attend meetings and trainings required by CDSS.
 - b) Respond to requests for program amendments in order to comply with applicable laws and guidance, as determined by CDSS.
 - c) Actively engage with technical assistance providers, including those contracted by CDSS, to support program growth, expansion, and improvement by attending meetings and trainings and contributing to technical assistance efforts, such as process mapping, program design, and case conferencing exercises.
- 5) Respond to requests for program progress reports, updates, expenditure information, including amount spent on prevention services, administrative costs, direct services and financial assistance, or program assessments as requested by CDSS, including but not limited to:
 - a) For new grantees, implementation updates related to program ramp up at least every six months and then annually, after program implementation and until awarded amount is fully spent.
 - b) For existing grantees, annual implementation updates in accordance with a schedule as determined by CDSS.
 - c) For new and existing grantees, submit more frequent program updates if determined necessary by CDSS due to program performance.

ATTACHMENT FIVE: FY 2021-22 HOME SAFE DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

- 6) Maximize spending on direct financial assistance and minimize administrative costs in order to ensure that all Home Safe participants are provided housing assistance.
- 7) Utilize Emergency Rental Assistance Program/California COVID-19 Rent Relief before Home Safe to pay for rental backpay, when applicable.
- 8) Notify CDSS in writing at least 30 days in advance of any temporary or permanent interruption or end to Home Safe services and operations for any reason, including fully spending the given allocation.
- 9) CDSS reserves the right to reallocate Home Safe funds should a grantee be out of compliance with applicable laws or guidance issued by CDSS and if CDSS determines it is appropriate or necessary to maximize program impact throughout the state.

I **[Insert Director Name]** certify that **[Insert County Name]** will administer the Home Safe pursuant to the terms outlined above and understand this is a condition of receiving Home Safe funds. The information completed within the form and attached are true and correct.

County Welfare Director Signature

Date

IV. SECTION FOUR: DECLINING FUNDS *(Only counties wishing to decline noncompetitive funds are asked to complete this section.)*

Declining Funds – Only complete if the county DOES NOT wish to accept any of the Noncompetitive Allocation outlined in Attachment Four.

Counties and tribes that do not wish to accept the Noncompetitive Allocation outlined in Attachment Four are asked to notify CDSS by completing and signing the section immediately below and returning it to housing@dss.ca.gov as soon as possible but no later than **Friday December 3, 2021**. CDSS will consider the funds declined if no response is provided to CDSS by the county or tribe by **Friday December 3, 2021**.

Note: counties and tribes accepting funds should not complete this section.

To decline the funds, check the box below and complete the name and signature of the County Welfare Director:

- Decline the entire amount of Home Safe Noncompetitive Allocation available to county.

County Welfare Director Signature

Date

ATTACHMENT SIX: INFORMATION ON ESTABLISHING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Grantees have the option to establish a regional Home Safe program. Counties and tribes in rural communities, communities with a regional CoC, grantees with regional HHAP awards, or neighboring tribal communities may benefit from a regional Home Safe. CDSS especially encourages partnerships between counties and tribes, or neighboring tribal grantees.

Regional programs rely on a shared administrative structure or program functions which can create more staffing and resource efficiency in communities with smaller caseloads that may not warrant a full-time program case manager, or in areas where hiring is challenging. Similarly, regions already served by a regional housing providers or organizations could benefit from a coordinated approach to partnering with these organizations to serve clients across a geographic region.

I. Regional Funding Availability

The amount available for regional programs is equal to the sum of the allocation of each participating county or tribe (as specified in Attachment Four). In addition to the Noncompetitive Allocation and/or proposed Tribal Home Safe allocation, CDSS will provide an additional \$150,000 to support and encourage regional programming.

II. Regional Program Agreement, Acceptance of Funds and Regional Director's Certification

Groups of counties and/or tribes interested in forming a **regional** Home Safe should contact CDSS housing@dss.ca.gov as soon as possible. CDSS will set up an initial conversation to discuss and work through potential program design models and ensure that the participating counties/tribes are in agreement with the requirements of Home Safe and the regional partnership. Once an agreement has been made, CDSS will provide the participating counties and/or tribes a Regional Director's Certification, in which participating counties and tribes can certify acknowledgement of program funding terms and requirements. Regional Director's Certifications, signed by all participating counties and tribes, **must be submitted by Friday December 3, 2021.**

III. Considerations

When discussing a potential regional structure, counties and tribes should consider the following questions:

- What is the combined estimate of Home Safe-eligible individuals and families in these communities? How many will require preventative services and homelessness assistance?
- How might housing needs differ in each of the participating communities?

ATTACHMENT SIX: INFORMATION ON ESTABLISHING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

- Will the regional Home Safe have a lead grantee?
- What functions, services and assistance will be centralized across the program? Which functions, if any, will remain within each grantee? (ex: programs have one housing navigator but retain independent outreach mechanisms)
- How will regional programs ensure that participants from each community have equal access to Home Safe services?
- What methods of communication will be established to ensure that coordination across grantees is streamlined, and that no participants fall through the cracks?
- How can a regional program leverage collaborative partnerships for critical services provided by other county departments or community-based providers, especially for roles with specific professional expertise? Examples include health care, behavioral health care, or legal aid.

IV. Postponed Regional Program Formation

If counties and tribes are unable to come to agreement prior to the deadline to accept the Noncompetitive Allocation but still wish to establish a Home Safe (with a possibility of a future regional program) they must submit the Director's Certification (Attachment Five) no later than **Friday December 3, 2021**. If a regional structure is desired later after the Director's Certification deadline, CDSS will work with counties and tribes to explore possible options. However, if the county or tribe does not submit the Director's Certification by **Friday December 3, 2021** to accept the Noncompetitive Allocation, CDSS cannot guarantee funding will be available during FY 2021-22.