



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program
Self-Certification of At-Risk of Homelessness

DATE [] / [] / []

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

First Name

Last Name

[] []

OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (attach an additional page as needed)

[] []
[] []
[] []

Section 1

I certify, I and any household members named above (Check all that apply¹):

- Have an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD; and
- Do not have sufficient resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent me from moving to an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation; and
- Meet one of the following conditions:
 - Will lose our primary nighttime residence within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance, and no subsequent residence has been identified
 - Have moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - Are living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - Have been notified in writing that our right to occupy our current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance
 - Live in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - Live in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the US Census Bureau;
 - Are exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution);
 - Live in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in Sonoma County's approved consolidated plan.

¹ Applicant must meet all three (3) conditions of Section 1 to meet the definition of at-risk of homelessness to be eligible for ESG assistance.



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Section 2

I certify, I and any household members named above:

- Are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that occurred in my primary nighttime residence or has made me afraid to return to my primary nighttime residence, have no other resources, and I lack the resources or support networks (family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) to obtain permanent housing.

Applicant Certification

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Applicant Name _____

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Staff Certification

I understand that Third party verification is the preferred method of certifying eligibility for an individual or family who is applying for assistance and self-declaration is only permitted when I have attempted but cannot obtain such verification and as the Intake Worker cannot verify homelessness.

Documentation of attempts made for third-party verification (include who was contacted, dates of attempts and method of contact – phone, email, etc.):

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Staff Name Conducting Initial Evaluation _____

Staff Signature _____ Date _____



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Programs: Emergency Solutions Grant and Sonoma County Community Development Commission funded programs

Homeless service projects each have specific eligibility criteria that participants must meet to obtain services through that project. HUD provides the preferred order for documentation of homelessness and at-risk of homelessness, as well as standards for ensuring that records maintained by program staff sufficiently demonstrate compliance with the recordkeeping requirements.

Homeless services projects funded by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission will obtain verification of homelessness or at-risk of homelessness during the initial evaluation for each participant. The verification of homelessness or at-risk of homelessness must follow HUD's preferred order of documentation of Third Party verification first, Intake Worker observation second, and self-certification by the program participant third. All documentation of homelessness or at-risk of homelessness must be kept in the participant file.

The "Self-Certification of At-Risk of Homelessness" should be used if Third Party verification, and Intake Worker Observations cannot be obtained to verify an applicant's eligibility status. To qualify as eligible for projects serving participants who are at-risk of homelessness, an applicant's situation must meet the criteria under the "at-risk of homelessness" definition per 24 CFR 576.2 or meet the criteria under paragraph (2), (3), or (4) of the "homeless" definition in 24 CFR 576.2. Providers may use their own documentation of eligibility but must ensure it meets the requirements of 24 CFR 576.500.

At-Risk of Homelessness per 24 CFR 576.2:

1. An individual or family who:

- i. Has an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;
- ii. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the "homeless" definition in this section; and
- iii. Meets one of the following conditions:
 1. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 2. Is living in the home of another because of financial hardship;
 3. Has been notified in writing that the households right to occupy their current housing or living situation terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

4. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
5. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there resides more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the US Census Bureau;
6. Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or another youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
7. Otherwise, lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan;

2. A child or youth who does not qualify as "homeless" under this section, but qualifies as "homeless" under section 387(3) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 USC 5732a(3)), section 637(11) of the Head Start Act (42 USC 9832(11)), section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 USC 14043e-2(6)), section 330(h)(5)(A) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254b(h)(5)(A)), section 3(m) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2012(m)), or section 17(b)(15) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 USC 1786(b)(15)); or*

3. A child or youth who does not qualify as "homeless" under this section, but qualifies as "homeless" under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11434a(2)), and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that child or youth if living with her or him.**

* If an applicant qualifies for services under number 2 of the at-risk of homelessness definition, the service provider **must** obtain third-party verification of eligibility. Applicants may not self-certify for eligibility when qualifying for services under number 2 of the at-risk of homelessness definition. Records must reflect that the program participant met the definition of homeless under one of the stated federal statutes, as evidenced by a certification of the child or youth's homeless status by the agency or organization responsible for administering assistance under the statute.

If an applicant qualifies for services under number 3 of the at-risk of homelessness definition, the service provider **must obtain third-party verification of eligibility. Applicants may not self-certify for eligibility when qualifying for services under number 3 of the at-risk of homelessness definition. Documentation must reflect that the child, or youth in the household, qualifies as homeless under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as evidenced by certification of the child or youth's homeless status by an agency or organization that administers assistance under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

Paragraph (2) of the homeless definition per 24 CFR 576.2:
An individual or family:



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

1. The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
2. No subsequent residence has been identified; and
3. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;

Paragraph (3) of the homeless definition per 24 CFR 576.2:

Unaccompanied youth under 25 years, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

1. Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 USC 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 USC 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 USC 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 USC 1786(b)) or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11434a);**
2. Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
3. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
4. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment.***

***If an applicant qualifies for services under Paragraph (3) of 24 CFR 576.2 the service provider **must** obtain third party verification of eligibility for number 1 and number 4 above.

Paragraph (4) of the homeless definition per 24 CFR 576.2:

Any individual or family who:

1. Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee; domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; and
2. Has no other residence; and
3. Lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing

Procedure for Completing the Self-Certification of At-Risk of Homelessness



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Applicant will:

1. Enter the date the form is being completed,
2. Applicant name, and
3. The names of any additional household hold members.

If applicant qualifies under Category 1

1. Applicant will mark the box next to the location that best describes where they are currently residing.
 - a. Only one location should be checked as to where applicant is staying.
2. Applicant will complete any additional information requested as to where they are staying.
3. The applicant will sign their name, and the date to certify the information they have entered is true and correct.
4. A staff member will complete the due diligence documentation.
 - a. Due diligence documentation should include the following:
 - i. Description of efforts to contact and obtain third-party documentation, including dates, times, and supporting documentation is made.
 - ii. Description of the outcome, including obstacles, encountered.
5. A staff member will sign and date to certify the information they have entered is true and correct.

If the applicant qualifies under Category 4

1. The applicant will mark the box if their current situation meets all criteria listed.
2. The applicant will sign their name, and the date to certify the information they have entered is true and correct.
3. A staff member will complete the due diligence documentation.
 - a. Due diligence documentation should include the following:
 - i. A description of the efforts staff made to contact and obtain third-party documentation, including dates, times, and supporting documentation.
 - ii. A description of the outcome, including obstacles, encountered.
4. A staff member will sign and date to certify the information they have entered is true and correct.

Additional guidance for documenting at-risk of homelessness status:

1. Intake workers are responsible for obtaining the evidence of at-risk of homelessness status, not applicant/participant.
2. For applicants Fleeing Domestic Violence
 - a. Non-Victim Service Providers
 - i. If the individual or family is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to power, then acceptable evidence includes an **oral statement and completion of the Self-Certification by the individual or head of**



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

household seeking assistance that they are fleeing that situation, that no subsequent residence has been identified and that they lack the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain additional housing.

- ii. The health and safety of the individual or family are not jeopardized, the oral statement must be verified through third-party verification. If the health and safety of the individual or family would be jeopardized, the intake worker must document the reason for this. The intake worker should only document the minimum information needed to show proof of eligibility.
 - iii. An intake worker should NOT contact anyone for documentation that the applicant feels would jeopardize his or her safety.
- b. Victim Service Providers
- i. If the individual or family is receiving shelter or services provided by a victim service provider, the oral statement must be documented by either a Self-Certification by the individual or head of household; or a certification by the intake worker. The certification must include that the individual or head of household seeking assistance are fleeing that situation, and that no subsequent residence has been identified and that they lack the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other housing.