

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

for the

Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency – Service Coordinator (ROSS-SC) Program

Table of Contents

RENEWALS	1
REPORTING	1
MATCH	3
ONBOARDING AND SUPPORT	3
ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS	5
USE OF FUNDS.....	6
DIRECT SERVICES.....	8
ADMINISTRATIVE	8

RENEWALS

Question 1: I have unexpended funds from a previous grant. Can I transfer these funds to my upcoming renewal grant, or will they be recaptured?

Answer 1: Grant funds can only cover costs incurred during their associated grant term. Once the grant term ends, remaining funds are recaptured. For example: if you have a fiscal year (FY) 18 grant with an end date of 3/17/22, the FY18 funds can only cover costs incurred through 3/17/22. Remaining funds after 3/17/22 do not carry over to a renewal FY21 grant.

Question 2: Do you anticipate the 2024 ROSS grant starting June 1, 2025?

Answer 2: Our goal is to standardize June 1st as the grant term start date for all ROSS grants moving forward.

REPORTING

Question 3: What is the reporting period for the Year One annual report?

Answer 3: The reporting period for the first year covers the first day your grant went into effect (usually June 1st of a given year) to September 30th of the same year. This means that for the first year of your grant, the data will only be for a partial year. The due date is October 30th, so you have one month after the reporting period ends to submit your report to HUD.

Question 4: What is the difference between Standards for Success and Grant Solutions?

Answer 4: Grant Solutions is the system that manages various aspects of the grant workflow for ROSS and other federal grants. You will go to Grant Solutions to submit your data report.

Standards for Success (SfS) is the name HUD uses for its standardized reporting framework for some of its grant programs, including ROSS.

Question 5: Will HUD consider qualitative data in addition to the quantitative data it requires in annual reports?

Answer 5: In order to meet the requirements of the grant, you must submit *quantitative data*. Qualitative data submitted as a narrative attachment in Grant Solutions is acceptable as a supplement to your quantitative data. Submitting only a narrative report will not fulfill your reporting requirements unless HUD has given approval for extenuating circumstances. If you do choose to submit a narrative, you should send it to the ROSS mailbox (ROSS-PIH@hud.gov) to ensure that HUD HQ staff are aware of your submission.

Question 6: When can we expect the ROSS Data Guide 4.0?

Answer 6: We hope to have a new Data Guide for ROSS later this year or early next year (2023).

Question 7: My ROSS grant received an extension, and I received a renewal grant. Do I report on the data I collected during the period of my extension?

Answer 7: Yes, you do have to report on this extension period. This data will have to be included as part of your final report data report. So, this last report will cover your original reporting period, plus the additional extension period. Check your grant agreement for how many days you have after the grant term ends to submit your final report to HUD. And remember, make sure to submit your financial report covering the entire grant period as well as the necessary closeout certifications to your local HUD field office. See question 9 below for more information on final reports.

For your renewal grant, your first data report will cover the beginning of your grant term through September 30 of that first year.

Question 8: How can I access technical assistance for reporting?

Answer 8: There are several resources available to assist you. Your first stop should be the [ROSS page on HUD Exchange](#) where you'll find past webinars on reporting, [a data guide](#), as well as a very useful [Quick Reference Guide](#). In addition, we offer one-on-one technical assistance through our TA provider. When this opportunity opens up, we send out a note to the ROSS listserv. It is available for a limited time, so make sure to sign up!

Question 9: When is my final report due?

Answer 9: The final report is due a set number of days after your grant term ends. Please check your Grant Agreement for the exact number of days that apply to your grant. The final report consists of your Grant Solutions performance data covering the last reporting period as well as the Federal Financial Report Form SF-425 covering the entire grant term. In addition to the final report, please note that the certification of completion and certification of compliance are necessary requirements for closeout. Both certifications, as well as the SF-425, must be submitted to your local HUD field office.

MATCH

Question 10: Am I required to track match contributions used or show HUD my match letters?

Answer 10: At any time during the grant term, HUD may ask to review match letters. During the grant term, HUD may also request a log of actual match contributions used. Failure to produce match letters or proof of actual match contributions provided may result in termination of your award.

Question 11: What happens if my match commitment falls through?

Answer 11: Pursuant to section 34(d) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 and the ROSS NOFO, you must have at least a 25% match of your grant amount. If you still meet the minimum 25% match after your match commitment falls through, no further action is needed. However, if this change now leaves you with less than a 25% match commitment, you must secure a new match commitment that will bring you to the 25% match level that was required at the time of your application.

Question 12: If I gain a new match commitment over the course of the grant, do I need a new match letter?

Answer 12: You are required to have match letters for the match commitments you are using to meet your 25% minimum requirement. Any match letters beyond that are encouraged and optional.

Question 13: We originally stated we had a 35% match, but now we only have a 25% match due to change in partners. Is that an issue?

Answer 13: No. The key is that you secured a minimum 25% match commitment at the time of your application.

ONBOARDING AND SUPPORT

Question 14: We are a new grant. Does HUD Exchange help set up a new ROSS Program?

Answer 14: Absolutely! The ROSS HUD Exchange page includes a “[Get Started with ROSS](#)” page that introduces you to your grant and a [Step-by-Step Guide](#) to help you set up the program. The ROSS HUD Exchange page also has our Data Guide, Data Quick Reference Guide, and webinars that provide best practices on topics ranging from reporting to motivational interviewing.

Question 15: Can ROSS grantees establish a social media group to share information and best practices?

Answer 15: Yes! You are welcome to reach out to your peers and create virtual platforms to learn from each other.

Question 16: Where can I access resources to help me hire our Service Coordinator?

Answer 16: We encourage you to review the recommended Service Coordinator qualifications outlined in your ROSS Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) as well as industry resources available through the [American Association of Service Coordinators](#) (AASC).

Question 17: Where can I find trainings for Service Coordinators?

Answer 17: HUD and AASC both provide trainings for Service Coordinators. Make sure you receive all invitations to HUD trainings by [joining our listserv](#).

Question 18: Where can I find guidance for implementing the ROSS grant in a remote environment?

Answer 18: We’re providing a few best practices and technology tools you may find helpful. Please note that HUD does not endorse any of the technology products; they are being provided for informational purposes only.

When meeting with clients remotely, use video conferencing (FaceTime/Zoom/Skype etc.) if at all possible:

- If this option is used, it really isn’t very different than an in-person visit. Of course, document-sharing is more limited unless you’re able to send items ahead of time or after the visit to the participant.

If using the phone only:

- Determine objectives of the call ahead of time to promote outcomes in line with the client’s case management plan.
- Follow normal visit procedures as much as possible.

Privacy concerns:

- With everyone at home, and with kids too, asking permission to have a personal discussion will be important. For example, let the client know that your kids are at home and ask them if it is ok to still conduct the appointment.

- **Some technology tools:**
 - Some sites have used [RingCentral](#) for their online video meetings and appointments and to conduct all texting and phone calls. You can easily download an app on your cell phone to do texting and phone calls.
 - Some other tools that are out there include [Zoom](#) and [Google Voice](#) and [Google Hangouts](#).
 - **Make file-sharing and data-tracking tools web-based.** Some sites use [box.com](#) to store files, you can create secure file-sharing links to share COPs and other documents. You can also email links to individuals, like clients or other colleagues.
 - Coaching tools and data tracking can also be housed within [Salesforce.com](#). Texting within Salesforce is possible.
 - **For things that need signatures**, some sites use [DocuSign](#). Clients and housing providers can securely sign documents from their email and everyone gets an emailed copy of the final document with all signatures.
 - **For sharing information securely over email**, some sites use [Virtru](#) to encrypt sensitive information.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Question 19: Can ROSS grantees provide services to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) clients?

Answer 19: ROSS Service Coordinators can only serve public and Indian housing residents. However, if the Service Coordinator is planning a community event, such as a health fair, other residents may participate. The main takeaway is that HCV participants can't be actively case managed by the Service Coordinator.

Question 20: Do you have any advice on how to navigate having both ROSS and FSS programs?

Answer 20: ROSS can be used to prepare residents for the FSS program. By helping residents who may need assistance with training or other needs to better prepare them for FSS, ROSS can help residents set goals and link them to the services they need to meet those goals.

Question 21: Can ROSS Service Coordinators serve both elderly/disabled and youth/family residents?

Answer 21: Absolutely! If you applied to serve both populations, you should be doing this.

USE OF FUNDS

Question 22: Can training funds be used to provide trainings for residents, including Resident Associations?

Answer 22: No. Training funds are only available for the professional development of the Service Coordinator.

Question 23: Does the travel and training budget line item (BLI) cover mileage?

Answer 23: Yes. You may use the rates your PHA would cover. However, remember the costs must be reasonable and necessary.

Question 24: Is HUD pre-approval required for training that is virtual and doesn't require travel?

Answer 24: HUD pre-approval is required for all trainings that require the use of ROSS training funds. If the virtual training does not require reimbursement from the ROSS grant, no pre-approval is needed.

Question 25: Can administrative funds cover computers for resident use?

Answer 25: Administrative funds may be used to purchase computers that are available to all residents in a community space. Administrative funds may not be used to purchase a personal computer for an individual resident.

Question 26: Can administrative funds be used for resident Wi-Fi?

Answer 26: Administrative funds may be used to cover Wi-Fi expenses in a community space. Administrative funds may not be used to cover in-unit Wi-Fi expenses for an individual resident. However, other public housing funds may be used for this purpose. See [this HUD guidance](#) for how the public housing Capital and Operating Funds can be used to provide in-unit Wi-Fi or cover the costs of in-unit Internet service.

Question 27: Can administrative funds be used to purchase case management software?

Answer 27: Yes! We encourage grantees to use their administrative funds to purchase case management software. It is a best practice to use your case management software to support high quality reporting.

Question 28: Can administrative funds cover face masks for ROSS participants?

Answer 28: Face masks may be an eligible cost in some circumstances. The key is that they must be linked to resident self-sufficiency. If you would like to use administrative funds to purchase face masks for a resident, please submit the request to your local HUD field office representative for review. HUD will have to review the specifics of the situation to determine whether the cost is eligible.

Question 29: Can the grant be split between multiple staff serving the ROSS Program, or are we restricted to hiring one person?

Answer 29: Job sharing is permitted. For example, you could have two people sharing the Service Coordinator position. Having more than 2 people share one position may not, however, be efficient or practical.

Question 30: Does my salary allocation include fringe?

Answer 30: Yes, the salary BLI can be used for both salary and fringe. If, however, you pay more than what the grant funded you for, you must use other sources of funds to cover the difference.

Question 31: Are budget amendments allowed?

Answer 31: Budget amendments are discouraged and are generally not allowed. If a budget amendment is considered, this typically occurs during an extension period (also discouraged).

Question 32: What costs require pre-approval, and who does the pre-approving?

Answer 32: All grantees must receive pre-approval from the field office for their training and travel costs. In addition, grantees awarded under the FY21 NOFO and after can be reimbursed for direct services costs. Direct services costs also require pre-approval from the field office.

Question 33: I am an FY21 grantee, and I'd like to use a portion of my administrative funds to pay for a direct service. How can I submit my pre-approval request?

Answer 33: If you are interested in using a portion of your administrative funds for the provision of direct services, you must receive prior approval from HUD. HUD considers several eligibility criteria, including whether the direct service ties into the findings of the Resident Needs Assessment and whether the recipient of the direct service is an active ROSS participant. You must submit [this form](#) as well as a copy of the community needs assessment you conducted in order for HUD to be able to evaluate your request. Please send these items and your request to ROSS-PIH@hud.gov.

Question 34: As a PHA, can I lease my own space to the ROSS program and charge it to the ROSS grant?

Answer 34: If the space you want to lease is funded with public housing funds, you may not lease this to the ROSS grant. However, if it's not supported by public housing funds, you may.

Question 35: Are light refreshments an eligible cost?

Answer 35: Yes, but with the following caveats. You are expected to try to secure light refreshments from local partners first before considering funding light refreshments with the ROSS grant. Light refreshments are not a meal. Chips, chopped veggies, crackers/cookies, soda and water constitute light snacks. Light snacks can only be used to support the successful

implementation of your grant. For example, at the beginning of your grant, you could offer light refreshments at a community meeting that you organize to explain to residents what the ROSS program is and how they can benefit. If you have any questions about this, please contact your field office.

Question 36: Can I use ROSS funds to help cover dental work for a resident?

Answer 36: No. In general, ROSS funds should not be used to support medical expenses of residents.

DIRECT SERVICES

PLEASE NOTE: At this time, direct services are only eligible for FY21 grantees.

Question 37: What are examples of eligible direct service costs?

Answer 37: Eligible direct services can include covering the cost of a resident’s GED test or subcontracting with an accredited provider to bring onsite credit counseling services to active ROSS participants. See Section III of the 2021 NOFO for detailed examples.

Question 38: Do direct services require pre-approval from HUD?

Answer 38: Yes. You will be required to submit [this form](#) for direct service requests, and you must receive pre-approval from HUD before incurring direct service costs.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Question 39: How do I establish my LOCCS account?

Answer 39: To establish access to e-LOCCS, grantees must adhere to the requirements below outlined in this guidance:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/cfo/loccs_guidelines and complete and submit the following forms:

- i. HUD-27054 *Line of Credit Access Authorization Form* (for e-LOCCS).
- ii. SF-1199A *Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form* with sample **voided** check. NOTE: The depositor account on the SF-1199A may be the same receiving account as other HUD programs. (The SF-1199A form is available here: <https://www.gsa.gov/forms-library/direct-deposit-sign-form>).
- iii. These forms should be sent to the grantee’s local HUD field office for processing. Field office will provide the grant number and program area ID.

After HUD processes the above documents, the Grantee will receive the following:

- i. The coordinator will receive the user identification number for the individual who will be authorized to draw down the funds from e-LOCCS.
 - ii. The Approving Official (who could also be the coordinator) will receive a recertification email every six months to provide continual approval for the individual who will complete the drawdowns. This email is scheduled based on the geographical location of the Grantee and will contain recertification instructions.
- Grantees are required to maintain the integrity and Security of e-LOCCS. Under no circumstances may Grantees share User-IDs.

Gaining access to e-LOCCS:

- To gain access to HUD Secure Systems in order to use e-LOCCS, grantees must follow the instructions as outlined in the e-LOCCS Registration Guide: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=e-LOCCS_registration_guide.pdf.
- The approving official who completes block 6 of HUD form 27054-e is required to register as the **coordinator** in Secure Systems and the user who completes blocks 1-5 of HUD form 27054-e is required to register as the **user** in Secure Systems.

Question 40: Does the LOCCS account change for renewals, or does it stay the same?

Answer 40: Access to LOCCS for the grantee doesn't change (unless staff has changed). The grantee has to request reimbursement from the new grant, so you'll need the new grant number. Otherwise, nothing changes.

Question 41: Who is my local HUD field office representative?

Answer 41: Your local HUD field representative should have sent you an email shortly after you received your award. If you have not received an email, contact the program office at ROSS-PIH@hud.gov, and we will provide the contact for you.

Question 42: What happens to equipment I purchased with ROSS funds after my grant term ends?

Answer 42: You can retain the equipment and continue to use it for its intended purposes for as long as needed, whether or not the program continues to be supported by the HUD grant (per 2 CFR [200.313\(c\)\(1\)](#)). When it's no longer needed to support the original program, the equipment can be used to support other activities in this order of priority:

- Activities under a Federal award from the Federal awarding agency which funded the original program or project, then

- Activities under Federal awards from other Federal awarding agencies. This includes consolidated equipment for information technology systems. For more information on this, please review [2 CFR 200.313\(c\)](#).

Property records should be maintained per 2 CFR 200.313(d)(1). When the property is no longer needed, the grantee must request disposition instructions from the field office. However, items with an individual per-unit market value of \$5000 or less may be retained, sold, or otherwise disposed of with no further responsibility to HUD (per 2 CFR 200.213(e)(1)).

Except as provided in [§ 200.312\(b\)](#), or if the Federal awarding agency fails to provide requested disposition instructions within 120 days, items of equipment with a current per-unit fair market value in excess of \$5,000 may be retained by the non-Federal entity or sold. The Federal awarding agency is entitled to an amount calculated by multiplying the current market value or proceeds from sale by the Federal awarding agency's percentage of participation in the cost of the original purchase. If the equipment is sold, the Federal awarding agency may permit the non-Federal entity to deduct and retain from the Federal share \$500 or ten percent of the proceeds, whichever is less, for its selling and handling expenses.