

Re-Entry Demonstration Rental Housing Support (RHS) Program Frequently Asked Questions

Note to reader: this is a partial overview and meant to serve as a general resource. For the complete program rules, see the Re-Entry Demonstration Program Request for Applications and the RHS Program guide.

What is the purpose of this demonstration program?

The RHS Re-Entry Demonstration Program “Re-Entry Program” will provide rental assistance for individuals exiting the State prison system. The program will serve two extremely low-income populations:

1. Elderly and/or disabled.
2. Enrolled in a graduated reintegration program with a post-release plan that includes employment.

How does the program work?

Rental assistance will be provided to landlords in quarterly payments equal to the difference in the reasonable rent for the unit and the tenant portion of rent, which will be based on a percentage of income.

How will tenants get into the program?

Eligible tenants will be referred by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to the selected Re-Entry Program housing provider as well as a local social service provider. Potential participants will have received in-depth programming prior to release and will be released on parole directly into an RHS Re-Entry unit. Potential tenants will have a post release service plan as well as the support of a local service provider.

What is the source of rental assistance funds?

This demonstration program will use Rental Housing Support (RHS) funds, which originate from a \$10 real estate document recording fee, to fund the rental assistance.

Where will individuals leaving the prison be housed?

Individuals leaving incarceration will be housed in privately owned housing units across the state. Organizations selected for awards will have defined service areas and will work with local landlords in that area to identify rental units that would participate in the program.

Can these funds be used statewide?

RHS funds can be used statewide with the exception of the City of Chicago. The City of Chicago receives a separate allocation of RHS funds and administers rental assistance programs within the city limits.

Who can apply for these funds?

Eligible housing providers that are units of local government, local Housing Authorities, or not-for-profit organizations can apply. Eligible applicants can apply for up to 30 units of funding.

Who will pay for supportive services?

Support services will be paid by IDOC through existing contracts. Potential participants will be assigned to a service provider while incarcerated, and will be released with a post-release service plan. The service provider is responsible for setting the individual up with any state or federal assistance they are eligible for, as well as providing any additional services required.

What is the application timeline?

The Re-Entry Demonstration Program RFA was released on June 5, 2019, with applications being accepted June 28, 2019. IHDA will continue to accept applications until all funds are awarded. The anticipated total award amount will not exceed \$3 million.

Are recently released individuals eligible for this program?

Only individuals who are currently incarcerated in the state prison system and who have gone through pre-release counseling and planning are eligible to participate in this program.

What if landlords are not willing to house sex offenders or those who served time for arson?

Participants who are on these registries will not be eligible for the program.

How will these individuals pay the required tenant contribution?

The tenant contribution schedule is being updated to include a \$0 income = \$0 contribution line. It will be made effective program wide, not just for Re-Entry clients.

What if there is a unit available and there is not a participant ready to be released?

Participants can sign a lease up to 45 days prior to their scheduled release date. This will allow for any last minute changes to release date to not affect unit availability.

How long will IDOC pay for services for these individuals?

IDOC will pay for the necessary services to ensure the individuals make a successful transition. This varies by individual so a specific timeframe cannot be given.

What if a landlord requires a security deposit?

If needed, the first month's rent can be up to \$250 higher than subsequent rents. This can be viewed as a non-refundable move in fee by landlords.

Do landlords need to modify their Tenant Selection Plans (TSP) to participate in this program?

The IHDA TSP includes a section for landlords to indicate that they will accept referrals who have been incarcerated. Landlords are able to have additional screening criteria, but must allow ex-offenders to apply and cannot deny them solely based on that fact.

How do housing provider applicants determine a total to house this population?

Housing providers should take into account local market conditions when estimating rents. These units should not be different from other RHS units. Housing providers should also consider including different bedroom size units to potentially accommodate families who are reuniting after release.