The following proposal resulted from empirical research, review of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data and calculations of housing gaps and needs assistance based on statewide, regional, and county-level factors. Specifically, the ICA worked with IFA to review and consider pre-COVID poverty and unemployment rates, the subsequent rise in COVID-related unemployment, household income, housing costs and gaps, rent burdened households, and the impacts of COVID-triggered utility and eviction moratoriums (and the lifting of such moratoriums), among other factors.

The first action with the available CARES funds is an expansion of existing ESG recipient projects funding to 150% of existing allocations, thereby making certain the existing infrastructure will be more secure, including prevention, rapid rehousing, and emergency shelter programming. Beyond the initial 50% expansion of allocation to existing ESG grantees, statewide we recommend that 45% of funds be allocated to prevention while 55% is allocated to rapid re-housing (table 1). On average, county by county, the new jobless claims in Iowa over the five weeks following the emergence of COVID-19 were 300% of the baseline unemployment rates. When crisis-related housing eviction moratorium are lifted, we anticipate significant increases in need for homeless prevention assistance. Prioritizing prevention assistance, and partnering this relief with rapid rehousing assistance, provides a dual approach that is expected to substantially reduce the demand on other homeless assistance and housing project types, including emergency shelter.

Table 1

Our state is likely to see an increase of Iowans sleeping in places not meant for human habitation and entering emergency shelter, based on observations following the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It is strongly recommended that rapid rehousing agencies be encouraged to also apply for prevention funding. Recommended allocation between prevention and rapid re-housing is calculated by county and aggregated by coordinated entry region (table 2) using labor force and unemployment statistics from Iowa’s Workforce Development office, as well as Comprehensive Housing Affordability Study (CHAS) data from August 5, 2019, to identify the portion of the population in each county that is spending more than half the household income on either mortgages or rents with a household income below 50% of the area median household income. We have previously demonstrated that the population in this condition is highly predictive of where people experiencing homelessness in Iowa are likely to come from.

To manage the relationship between the Balance of State (BOS) Emergency Services Grant (ESG) and the presence of recipients in other continua of care, with independent ESG allocations, an original calculation was done to determine the amounts that would be provided for each coordinated entry region given equitable distribution of the funds, had the entire amount awarded to the three continua, and distributed to prevention and rapid rehousing, been distributed across the state as a whole according to the factors outlined. Then the amount already awarded to each continuum apart from the balance of state was removed from its need-based allocation, and the amount necessary to make that continuum whole was allocated from BOS ESG CARES funding. Per those calculations, Woodbury’s continuum of care allocation is in excess of sufficient to their projected need, and so their Balance of State allocation was reduced to the allocation floor in both prevention and rapid rehousing. Polk County showed excess need beyond their independent ESG award.

Table 2

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Continuum of Care  Region | Total |  | Recommended Distribution Within the COC Region | |
| *Prevention* | *Rapid Rehousing* |
| Woodbury | $63,531.49 | --- | 32.0% | 68.0% |
| Balance of Counties West | $118,856.42 | --- | 67.5% | 32.5% |
| Northwest Iowa | $207,493.60 | --- | 61.5% | 38.5% |
| Upper Des Moines | $241,812.15 | --- | 61.7% | 38.3% |
| Pottawattamie | $249,746.49 | --- | 40.8% | 59.2% |
| North East | $279,520.94 | --- | 62.9% | 37.1% |
| Two Rivers | $295,913.63 | --- | 70.5% | 29.5% |
| Balance of Counties East | $347,841.23 | --- | 89.4% | 10.6% |
| Black Hawk/Tama/Grundy | $348,292.14 | --- | 66.6% | 33.4% |
| South Central/West | $374,563.40 | --- | 44.8% | 55.2% |
| Southeast Iowa | $404,789.68 | --- | 57.4% | 42.6% |
| North Central Iowa | $433,141.75 | --- | 44.1% | 55.9% |
| Eastern Iowa | $454,314.81 | --- | 56.2% | 43.8% |
| Quad Cities Bi-State | $564,290.68 | --- | 45.6% | 54.4% |
| Polk County | $624,795.19 | --- | 47.0% | 53.0% |
| Johnson/Washington | $677,074.80 | --- | 30.9% | 69.1% |
| Linn/Benton/Jones | $1,291,965.61 | --- | 31.9% | 68.1% |
| Total | $6,977,944.00 | --- | 45% | 55% |

Table 3