

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) for

Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) Grantees and Applicants

The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) is providing this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) notice to address questions and concerns regarding the operations of the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) during the global pandemic resulting from COVID-19 (Coronavirus). This FAQ covers programmatic requirements for existing grantees; updates on the FY 2019 FHIP application evaluation and award process and the FY 2020 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

While we understand you may have concerns regarding the COVID-19's impact, please be assured that FHEO is monitoring the situation closely on a regular basis and will continuously provide updates to this notice as the situation evolves.

Impact of COVID-19 on Existing FHIP Awards

- 1. I have a question related to COVID-19's potential impact on my FHIP project activities, project related travel, or field work. Where are some of the places where I can find helpful information?**

Your employing organization is an ideal starting point. While the Federal Government has adopted instructions governing the work of its employees, the Department realizes that its partners may have Continuity of Operations plans in place that may vary. Organizations are to adhere to their individual plans while taking into consideration any instructions hereto that may impact grant performance.

There is a multitude of information available about COVID-19. We encourage you to consult the following resources:

COVID-19 in general, please visit the following sites:

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- Refer to your State or local health department

For up-to-date information regarding HUD's programs, notices and other information pertaining to COVID-19, visit HUD's website at:

- <https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>

- 2. Will FHEO provide for an extension to my award if the planned activities are disrupted by the COVID-19 public health threat?**

All FHIP awards are eligible for one-year FHEO-approved no-cost extensions and then further extensions as approved by FHEO. If you see a need for FHEO-approved extensions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, you should include that information in your quarterly report and contact your Government Technical Representative (GTR) as soon as possible to discuss the need so the award may be amended. See the FHIP Application and Award Policies and

Procedures Guide (AAPP Guide) Part 2 Chapter 1.f for additional information concerning grant extensions.

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/APP%20Guide%205.17.17mpn.pdf>

3. I am a FHIP grantee on a FHIP-funded/approved travel to a conference/meeting, but the meeting has been cancelled. Who do I contact regarding the impact to the FHIP award?

You should contact your FHIP GTR about this situation. Your GTR will be open to rescheduling the conference or allowing the use of funds for a future conference/meeting that is consistent with the original scope and objectives of the award.

In light of the public health threat, organizations may wish to consider alternate plans for meetings/conferences/trainings, such as providing or using virtual options such as SKYPE or GoToMeeting.

4. A conference, training or meeting has been canceled, but I have nonrefundable travel and/or hotel costs. Can these be charged to the FHIP grant?

FHEO advises grantees to contact the airline and/or hotel as soon as you are aware of the event cancellation to determine whether they have changed their non-refundable policies in light of COVID-19. If the policies have not changed, you should contact your assigned GTR about this situation as soon as possible. A determination will be made on a case by case basis.

5. I am involved in a large conference or a meeting that involves travel that is taking place in the coming weeks. Should I continue with my plans for the meeting?

Currently, the CDC recommends that gatherings of 10 or more people be canceled or postponed throughout the United States. We recommend you review the CDC's guidance regarding mass gatherings and make any adjustments necessary based on that information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

6. I am considering submitting a Conference or Travel request to my GTR for a future meeting. The site of the meeting has not yet been selected. Should I take into account COVID-19 in planning and site selection?

Travel/logistics, accessibility, and health and safety consideration should be taken in any conference or meeting proposal. Since the COVID-19 threat is still evolving, it is important to consider flexibility and alternative plans in a proposal to support travel or a conference.

7. My FHIP grant involves staff travel. Should I continue with plans?

Travel logistics, accessibility, and health and safety considerations of the participants in a testing, investigation or education and outreach project should always be considered. FHEO recommends consulting with your organization about its policies and procedures. You may consider approaching the planned project activities with flexibility, and/or devising alternate plans as appropriate. As noted above, FHEO understand that plans for enforcement and education and outreach activities may be disrupted and, in some instances, grantees may need extensions of the performance period to complete the project.

- 8. I am hosting a fair housing event, training, meeting or conference. If a participant arrives who appears sick, can I ask them to leave?**

Please follow the appropriate procedures of your organization. More generally, FHEO defers to grantees on decisions regarding safety and security of their staff, personnel and event participants.

- 9. I am hosting a fair housing training or similar activity involving the participation of fair housing leaders. An attendee arrived and appeared to be ill. Health authorities have ordered that the attendee be quarantined. Can I use my FHIP grant funds to cover costs for housing and meals during the quarantine period, even though the attendee is unable to participate in other activities at the meeting?**

In accordance with 2 CFR 200, the grantee cannot cover meal and incidental expenses of a conference attendee that has become ill while attending a conference. Please continue to follow all relevant policies and procedures, include those of your organization, and apply those practices consistently. You may also contact the GTR assigned your grant for any additional information.

- 10. I am considering replacing the face-to-face interaction with the use of virtual technology. Beyond simple videoconferencing, I would like to use augmented reality or other technology to make the interactions more effective. May I submit a budget change request to purchase and distribute the necessary equipment and/or contract with a service provider.**

Revisions can be made to address unexpected events that threaten the original scope and objectives of an award. Please refer to 2 CFR Part 200, to ensure that any changes comply with the established cost principles. You may contact the GTR managing your grant for any clarification or additional information.

- 11. I have concerns about traveling to a HUD-sponsored training or conference. What should I do?**

Contact your GTR as soon as practicable. FHEO will be flexible about accommodating virtual participation.

- 12. I have already booked my travel and accommodations for a HUD-sponsored training/conference. Will HUD reimburse me for these costs?**

FHIP grantees are responsible for the cancellation of room reservations in enough time to retain the deposits on personal credit cards. FHEO will not be able to provide reimbursements for such charges.

Impact of COVID-19 on the FY 2019 FHIP NOFA Application Evaluation and Award Selection

- 13. I am waiting for HUD to select and announce the FY 2019 FHIP awards. Will the COVID-19 delay HUD's selection and announcement of the FHIP awards?**

FHEO is making every effort to announce the award selections at the earliest possible time.

Impact of COVID-19 on the FY 2020 FHIP NOFA Process

- 14. I am quarantined for a period of time. There is a FHIP application deadline during my quarantine period and some essential materials I need are in my office. Can I receive an extension to deadline?**

Please see Part I, Chapter 1 - Grant Application Guide in the FHIP Application and Award Policies and Procedures Guide for information regarding extensions to the application deadline set forth in the NOFA.

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/APP%20Guide%205.17.17mpn.pdf>

If you need further clarification, you may contact the FHIP Division Director for additional guidance.

- 15. My organization has asked staff to stay home for an undetermined period of time. How would I petition for an extension of an application deadline?**

Please see Part I, Chapter 1 - Grant Application Guide in the FHIP Application and Award Policies and Procedures Guide for information regarding extensions to the application deadline set forth in the NOFA.

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/APP%20Guide%205.17.17mpn.pdf>

If you need further clarification, you may contact the FHIP Division Director for additional guidance.

Please direct any questions to:

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