Alameda County Home Together Move-in Assistance Fund
Policies and Procedures
July 1st, 2026

Summary
The Alameda County Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund ("Fund") is a flexible resource that Alameda County residents experiencing homelessness can access to help cover move-in costs after securing permanent housing. Eligible participants can access the Fund one time with a maximum spending amount of $5,000. Abode Services serves as the Fund Operator, in partnership with Alameda County Health - Housing & Homeless Services. The Fund Operator will process all Fund requests from Service Providers, coordinate the purchase of eligible items, and reimburse Providers when necessary.

Fund Policies

Household Eligibility

The Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund is available to individuals and households that meet the following eligibility criteria:

1) Is currently experiencing homeless[1] OR exited homelessness within the last 60 days with a confirmed move into housing; AND
2) Maximum household income at, or below, 30% Area Median Income (AMI); AND
3) Has not previously received funding from the Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund, HCS Housing Deposits or the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund.

In order to maximize resources available to a participant, Providers are encouraged to explore the use of other comparable community resources before accessing the Fund. A list of additional resources is available on the Alameda County Housing and Homelessness website.

Restrictions

Funds are available to each household one time only (even if the total funds were not exhausted). Households have a period of 6 months to utilize their funds. Exceptions can be made if a household is experiencing an emergency and needs to relocate to a new unit. Exceptions will only be approved with documentation as to what conditions have changed to demonstrate why providing the Funds would be more successful on the second attempt.

Provider Eligibility

An eligible service provider is defined as any person who works for an organization which receives funding from Alameda County and is contracted to provide assistance to individuals and families experiencing and/or exiting homelessness.

Provider Expectations

- Providers will serve as main point of contact for both the household and the Fund Operator. They must support the household throughout the application, approval, and/or denial process.
- Providers will be main point of contact for all furniture and large household appliances purchases.
- Providers are required to attest they do not have any personal financial interest in the properties, nor familial relations to vendors associated with the application and that the information on the application is correct based on their knowledge of the household's situation.

[1] Homelessness defined using the expanded California DHCS homelessness eligibility, which includes current HUD homelessness eligibility.

- Providers will work jointly with the household to gather all pertinent information and confirm that household meets program eligibility before submitting materials (e.g. check timeline due dates, participant income, housing sustainability plan, total spending amounts, etc.).
- Providers are expected to submit all necessary documentation/forms to Fund Operator on behalf of eligible household.
- Providers are expected to communicate all relevant updates regarding the Fund applications with the household.

Eligible Expenses
The Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund assistance is meant as one-time service to secure permanent housing and obtain basic household items, as described below. Eligible expenses can be applied for individually or in various combinations up to the total maximum amount of $5,000. The total amount requested through the Fund must include any tax and shipping costs related to what has been/is being purchased.

All requests require the submission of a lease, occupancy agreement, or offer of intent to rent along with a valid W-9 for the property owner. Any services and goods requested from the Fund must be based on an individual assessment of needs and documented as part of the Fund application. The Fund can only pay for future scheduled move-ins. Retro-active move-in costs will not be eligible to use the Fund.

1. First month's rent:
    - Applications requesting first month's rent payments must be completed within 30 days of lease start.
    - Individuals receiving long-term rental subsidies that already pay for first month's rent (including Transitional Rent) are not eligible to receive first month's rent.
    - Ongoing or back rent are ineligible costs that cannot be paid for by the Fund.
2. Security deposits**:**
    - Security deposits requested by property owners must be in accordance with California law.
3. Utility payments/deposits**:**
    - Utilities include but are not limited to electricity, gas, water, sewer and/or trash.
    - Set-up fees/deposits for utilities or service access
    - First month coverage of utilities at move in
    - Utility arrears (no time limit)
4. Health and safety services prior to move in: For example,
    - Pest eradication services
    - One-time cleaning services
    - Necessary minor repairs to meet HUD Housing Choice Voucher program quality standards or other habitability standards
    - Payments must be paid directly to the property owner on a reimbursement basis
    - *Note:* Only costs that are not the responsibility of the landlord under applicable law are eligible
5. Housing application fees:
    - Application fees to cover the cost of the lease application
    - Must be paid directly to the property owner or can be reimbursed to Providers, funds cannot be reimbursed to participants
6. Medically necessary items for the home: Adaptive aids or services that are necessary to ensure access and safety for the individual upon move-in to the home when they are not otherwise available. For example,
    - Hospital beds
    - Shower chairs
    - Hoyer lifts
    - AC/Cooling fan
    - Air filters and purifiers

- Portable heater
- Specialized cleaning or pest control supplies
- Air purifier/filter

7. Essential Household Furnishings:
    - If paid directly by the Fund, purchases can only be made to vendors pre-approved by the Fund Operator.
    - Providers must follow specific instructions for these orders depending on the vendor selected.

Exceptions: Only the items listed above can be approved for payment by the Fund Operator. If there is a special circumstance, Provider may request an exception when submitting a Fund application request. Providers will be asked to explain why an exception is needed. All exception requests will be elevated by Abode to Alameda County Housing and Homelessness Services for approval.

Eligible Payees

The Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund is able to make payments to the following entities:

- Property owners/property management companies
- Utility companies
- Approved vendors for direct purchase of furniture/household items
    - Requests for essential furniture and medically necessary items for the home requests will be made through a collaboration with vendors approved by the Fund Operator. Each vendor will have its own process. The current approved vendors include:
        - Furniture
            - Living Spaces
            - Dimensional Furniture (Oakland)
            - Best Price Furniture (San Leandro)
        - Other Essential Furnishings/Medically Necessary Items
            - Life Start-up Essentials
- Provider reimbursement
    - Reimbursement is an eligible payment option for all expense types. However, when Providers choose this payment option, they do so at their own risk as there is no guarantee that the Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund request will be approved.

Move-In Assistance Fund Procedures

Provider Application Process

Providers will follow the below process to utilize the Fund. For more details and training materials, please see Abode's Move-In Assistance Fund webpage.

1. Provider staff request user access to the Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund portal by completing the required training video available on Abode's Move-In Assistance Fund webpage and then emailing padmission@abode.org.
2. Fund Operator will set up provider staff as users in Padmission Journey to enable submission of requests. Once set up, users will be sent an email to set up their password and login.
3. Provider staff will submit requests using Padmission Journey (the Fund portal), attaching all supporting documentation as required.
    a. Please note that it is the Provider staff's responsibility to review and submit all documentation with each request (especially SSN or EIN in W-9 or exception request). Failure to do so may result in a rejection of the request and/or significant delays in the processing of financial assistance.
4. Fund Operator reviews submitted requests. Please note that Fund Operator will communicate with providers regarding requests using Padmission Journey.

   a. Fund Operator will reach out to provider staff within one business day of request submission to confirm the details of the financial assistance request.
   b. If upon receipt of the initial request, the Fund Operator determines that the request does not meet documentation standards (e.g., lease is incomplete or inaccurate, information in W-9 is incomplete or inaccurate, receipts or invoices are missing, etc.), the Fund Operator will reach out for clarification. Provider will have to re-submit once all verification can be provided.
   c. Provider staff must engage with Fund Operator as many times as needed to support the facilitation of payments in an accurate and timely manner.
   d. Requests may also be rejected by the Fund Operator financial team if there are issues with W-9 that were not caught earlier in the process. In these cases, the Fund Operator will reject the request, indicate the reason for denial, and immediately alert the Provider so they can resubmit with the proper documentation.
5. If the Provider needs to edit a request once it has been submitted in Padmission, the Provider can use the "withdraw to edit" function, so long as the request is still in the first stage of being reviewed. If the request has passed the first stage of review, Provider must contact the Fund Operator at acmoveinfund@abode.org in order to edit. The Fund Operator may be able to make changes to the request if it has not been fully processed.
6. Fund Operator can deliver payments as follows:
   a. Checks to a payee who is a landlord/property management company shall be sent via standard mail with tracking. In cases where the payment delivery is time sensitive because of the scheduled move-in date, the Provider may request priority mail delivery or pick up the payment from the Fund Operator's office and coordinate with the payee for delivery.
   b. Reimbursements to Providers shall be sent via standard mail with tracking. If Provider requires payment sooner, they may pick it up from the Fund Operator's office.
7. For requests that necessitate a purchase online, Providers may pay for the expense utilizing their own agency's funds and subsequently submit a reimbursement request to the Fund. The Fund will only reimburse eligible costs.
   a. If Provider is not able to utilize own agency funds for an online purchase, Fund Operator can make these purchases directly (i.e., utilize Abode's credit card). This option should only be used when the Provider is not able to utilize their own funds and/or in cases of emergency. This option will call for additional collaboration and partnership between the Provider and Fund Operator.

Fund Operator Review Process

1. Fund Operator receives a request via Padmission Journey from the Provider and completes an initial review.
2. Fund Operator contacts Provider staff within 1 business day to confirm the details of the financial assistance request and continues to engage with Provider staff as needed to facilitate accurate and timely payments. Fund Operator will communicate with Provider regarding submitted requests via the Padmission system for direct messages regarding submissions (e.g. corrections needed, rejections) or via acmoveinfund@abode.org if more information is needed.
3. If upon receipt of the initial request, the Fund Operator determines that the referral does not meet documentation standards (i.e., incomplete Fund Operator Checklist, using outdated forms, lease is incomplete or inaccurate, information in W-9 is incomplete or inaccurate, etc.), they will reach out via email to Provider for clarification. If the issue cannot be resolved right away, Fund Operator will immediately alert the Provider staff who submitted the request. Provider will have to re-submit once all verification can be provided.
4. For all requests, Fund Operator will check RealQuest to verify property ownership, and will contact the Provider for additional documentation needed to clarify any questions or concerns around property ownership.
   a. For properties that have recently changed ownership, submission of a Deed from the new payee will be required.
   b. For properties where the payee differs from the entity named on the lease agreement, a Property Management Agreement will be required to establish the relationship between the payee and the entity on the lease agreement.

   c. Note: The payee must be the entity named on the W9.
5. Fund requests may also be rejected if there are issues with W-9 forms that were not caught earlier in the process. In these cases, Fund Operator will immediately alert the Provider staff who submitted the request and their supervisor. Provider will be asked to re-submit with proper documentation.
6. Fund Operator will communicate on an ongoing and timely basis any delay in process and/or any reasons for request denials.
7. Payment is processed within 10 business days and issued to payee.
   a. Fund Operator will alert Provider staff and supervisor immediately if payment will not be able to be issued within 10 business days and follow up internally.
   b. Provider to alert Fund Operator immediately if any changes need to be made to the request. Depending on the timing and types of change, Fund Operator may not be able to accommodate the change and the request will need to be re-submitted.
8. Fund Operator to deliver payment as requested by Provider (see options above).
9. Fund Operator will notify Provider when the request has been processed, and the payment is out for delivery.
10. Fund Operator will ensure that all requests are entered into HMIS. For households that are fleeing domestic violence, anonymous accounts can be set up in HMIS.

Fund Cancellation Requests

In cases where a move-in falls through and the participant never actually moves in, funds should be returned to the Fund Operator.

Steps for Outstanding Checks

Abode Fund Operator team is responsible for regularly monitoring that all checks issued to third parties have been cashed and will follow these steps to collect and share information with the County regarding uncashed checks:

1. Abode's Fund Operator team will email the finance team on the 10th of each month to collect information on outstanding payments that were issued more than 30 days ago, where the checks have not been cashed.
2. Abode will follow up with the appropriate Provider directly via email to inform and/or request follow-up with the payee.
3. These checks will be valid until the 90-day mark of issuance, upon which they will be automatically cancelled by Abode's Fund Operator team.

HMIS Guidelines and Requirements

Fund Operator will enter household transactions into HMIS for all participants served through the Fund, not to exceed three business days after the date of service. Fund Operator will enter all data into HMIS per instructions in Appendix B.

Fund Operator will enroll all participants approved for payments from the Fund in the Move-In Assistance Fund program in HMIS.

- Program enrollments will stay active for 6 months.
- All fund payments will be entered as services, noting the service type, date of payment and expense amount matching all payment records.
- For agency reimbursements, service expense dates will be entered as the date of first purchase, not the date the Fund later reimbursed by the Provider.

Vendor Verification

All W-9s and rental assistance payments will go through a verification process by the Fund Operator:

- For new vendors, all W-9s will be submitted to Abode's Finance Team for verification and set up.
- For all rental assistance requests, the Move-In Assistance Fund team will verify ownership of the rental unit via RealQuest and will attach the RealQuest report to the purchase order submitted to the Finance Department.

- Issues with W-9 forms can delay or halt the request process. Abode will only issue payment to the entity listed on the W-9.
- The Abode Finance department will verify the information listed on all W-9 forms via the IRS. If a W-9 doesn't match IRS records, the W-9 will be rejected and the Provider will need to obtain a new or corrected form.
- Abode can only make payments to the entity listed on the W-9. If a vendor requests an alternative mailing address, Providers can add a note in Padmission when they submit a request.

Reminders

- Providers must complete all required documentation and to ensure requests are processed quickly.
- If a planned move-in is within less than 5 business days away, Provider staff should note this in Padmission and request priority mail delivery.
- Providers must ensure that vendor W-9 forms are completed fully and accurately. Failure to review documentation can lead to significant delays in processing financial assistance.

Fraud Prevention

Providers are responsible for ensuring that Participants meet all eligibility requirements for the Fund. Additionally, Providers are responsible for ensuring that landlords can provide sufficient ownership documentation and rental units have met all habitability standards. The Fund is not responsible for any lost or stolen household items purchased from vendors.

Communication

Once a request has been submitted by a Provider, correction requests or rejections will be sent via the Padmission portal. Providers are expected to review and respond to all communication in the portal regarding submitted requests.

For any questions and/or concerns regarding the Fund policy or past, pending, and future requests, Providers can email the Fund Operator at acmoveinfund@abode.org. All program communication outside of direct requests must be done via acmoveinfund@abode.org.

Appendix B

Documenting Housing Community Support Services in HMIS

All individuals receiving funding from the Home Together Move-In Assistance Fund will be enrolled in the corresponding HMIS program.

- Program enrollment date should be the participant's lease start date.
- All expenses will be entered into the project according to the expense type along with the expense amount and date of payment.
    - For expenses provided as Provider reimbursements, the program enrollment date will be backdated to align with the date of the original expense purchase date.
- All program exit destinations will be entered as the "current living situation" option selected within the Move-In Assistance Fund request form.