



Flex Fund Webinar Series

May 15, 2025

Webinar #1: Flex Fund Guide Introduction & Peer Support

COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS

Today's Facilitators



Michelle Valdez
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Megan Klenke-Isgriggs
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Peer Advisors



Olivia Hados
Principal Planning Analyst,
Chronic Homelessness
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Senior Director of Social Work
Preble Street
Portland, ME



Dylan Barbash
Built for Zero Specialist
City of Missoula, Community
Development
Missoula, MT

Today's Webinar

Share & Explore the BFZ Flex Fund Guide: The Built for Zero Flex Fund guide is designed to provide guidance at each stage of Flex Fund implementation. We'll explore the guide and address best practices and troubleshooting for each stage of implementation.

Learn from Peer Advisors & Each Other: Communities across BFZ network have effectively implemented Flex Funds for diverse purposes. The peer advisors will share their experiences and lessons learned to inform implementation in other communities.

Determine Other Webinar Topics: This is the first of three in a Flex Fund Webinar Series BFZ will be hosting this year. What is resonating? What topics needs more exploration? Feedback from attendees will be a helpful guide for planning the next webinars.

What is Flexible Funding?

Flex Funds Definition: Unrestricted dollars communities can utilize **to address individuals' unique barriers** to housing and effectively promote stability and prevent individuals from becoming or remaining homeless.

Flex Funds Core Principles

Structured for effective, efficient use with minimal funding restrictions

Adaptable to immediate needs

Designed to address immediate, individual barriers/resource gaps that other resources cannot cover

Maximized with a clear approach and strategy

What has that looked like in communities?

- Providing landlord incentives and establishing a risk mitigation fund to secure more units and speed up the move-in rate for people with housing subsidies.
- Removing housing barriers for people currently on the by-name-list (BNL).
- Removing housing barriers for households targeted for assistance during a 100-day Challenge to house families.
- Creating a “landlord support package” to recruit new property owners and secure units to house veterans on the BNL.
- Providing needed resources to stabilize households at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness, and entering onto the BNL.

Flex Fund Implementation Stages

- **Planning for Flexible Funding:** Bringing flexible funding into your community is a key step in enhancing your efforts to address homelessness. Developing a clear strategy and plan for this funding early - even before applying for funding - is crucial, regardless of whether this is a new approach or one your community is already utilizing.
- **Preparing for Implementation:** Once you have determined the “what” (need) and the “who” (target population) and you’ve secured flexible funding, you need to figure out the “how.” Implementation planning should include identifying a Fiscal Agent, building an outreach plan, and determining how to reach the intended audience. It should also include determining who will provide services and engage with participants, what specific needs are most likely to emerge, what limitations need to be set, and what communication strategy is needed.
- **Implementation: Putting Your Community Flex Fund to Work:** Your community flex fund is established, it's time to put it into action! Implementation is where you begin testing your hypotheses on how flexible funding can have the greatest impact on individual and system outcomes. At the time of implementation, it is important to establish a means for continuous improvement, ensuring that your data collection and decision-making processes are utilized to support informed adjustments as you go.
- **Understanding & Amplifying Impact for Ongoing Sustainability:** Thinking about long-term success, start planning for ongoing funding and sustainability early on. Track your progress and share your learnings and outcomes as you go.

Peer Advisor: Lightning Round



Dylan Barbash
Built for Zero Specialist
City of Missoula, Community Development
Missoula, MT

Flex Fund Population Focus: Veterans

Flex Fund goal & did/are you accomplish(ing) it:

15 Housing Placements in 2 months during a “Housed for the Holidays Sprint”, 12 of 15 veterans housed in 2 months

Hardest Flex Fund Lesson Learned:—the ability to quickly get a check out to overcome a last minute barrier- good to use a card some time

Life Most Changed by Flex Funds:—individual got into an assisted living facility, they had a waiver to pay once they got in but needed \$9000 to get into a unit.

Most Positive System Change by Flex Funds:—more coordination and communication across agencies, people moving quicker to get individuals into housing

NOT

^ Planning for a Flex Fund



And you get Flex Funds!
And you get Flex Funds!
And you get Flex Funds!



What are gonna do with these Flex Funds!?

Planning for a Flex Fund

01

Engage your planning team

- Case Conferencing partners and providers
- HMIS & data teams
- People with lived experience of Homelessness

02

Set target, aim for impact

- Define a target population
- Assess your current data, system flow and capacity
- Identify the metric to move

03

Assess and Mitigate Risks

- Strategic
- Operational
- Financial

Peer Advisor: Lightning Round



Olivia Hadio
Principal Planning Analyst,
Chronic Homelessness
Office to End Homelessness
Hennepin County, MN

Flex Fund Population Focus: Chronic

Flex goal & did/are you accomplish(ing) it:

— Reduce numbers of chronically homeless households by housing those already chronic and preventing folks from becoming chronic. Yes!

Hardest Flex Fund Lesson Learned:—Initially- equitable access to FF. Currently- decisionmaking to prolong FF availability.

Life Most Changed by Flex Funds:—Family, homeless since 2019, used FF to support with \$10,000 debt to LL.

Most Positive System Change by Flex Funds:—Decline in chronic numbers- and hundreds housed.

Preparing & Implementing a Flex Fund

01 Identify a Fiscal Agent & Financial Process

02

03

04

Critical Responsibilities of a Flex Fund Fiscal Agent



Financial Management

Receive, manage,
disburse funding



Record Keeping & Reporting

Maintain accurate records,
report outcomes



Compliance & Accountability

Flexibility & alignment
with rules & regs



Collaboration & Communication

Work closely and
effectively with partners



Evaluation & Monitoring

Track and monitor
performance, adjust as
needed

Preparing & Implementing a Flex Fund

01 Identify a Fiscal Agent & Financial Process

02 Establish Decision-making & Referral Chain

03

04

Establishing a Decision Making & Referral Process

DECISION MAKERS

WHO

Group vs. individual

HOW

Procedures, meeting frequency

POLICY & PARAMETERS

WHAT

Determine criteria and parameters

REQUIRE

Define necessary documentation

TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION

CLARIFY

Make policies and procedures accessible to stakeholders

SHARE

Progress, challenges, and needs

ADAPTABILITY & IMPROVEMENT

REVIEW

Regular review of process and outcomes

SHARPEN

Adjust and remove barriers as needed

PROVIDERS!!



Understand and adhere to process and procedures



Make appropriate referrals that include required documentation

Preparing & Implementing a Flex Fund

01 Identify a Fiscal Agent & Financial Process

02 Establish Decision-making & Referral Chain

03 Spread the Word

04

Spread the Word

Who are you
trying to reach?

What are the
most suitable
platforms to
reach them?

Leverage
community
partners and
providers

Preparing & Implementing a Flex Fund

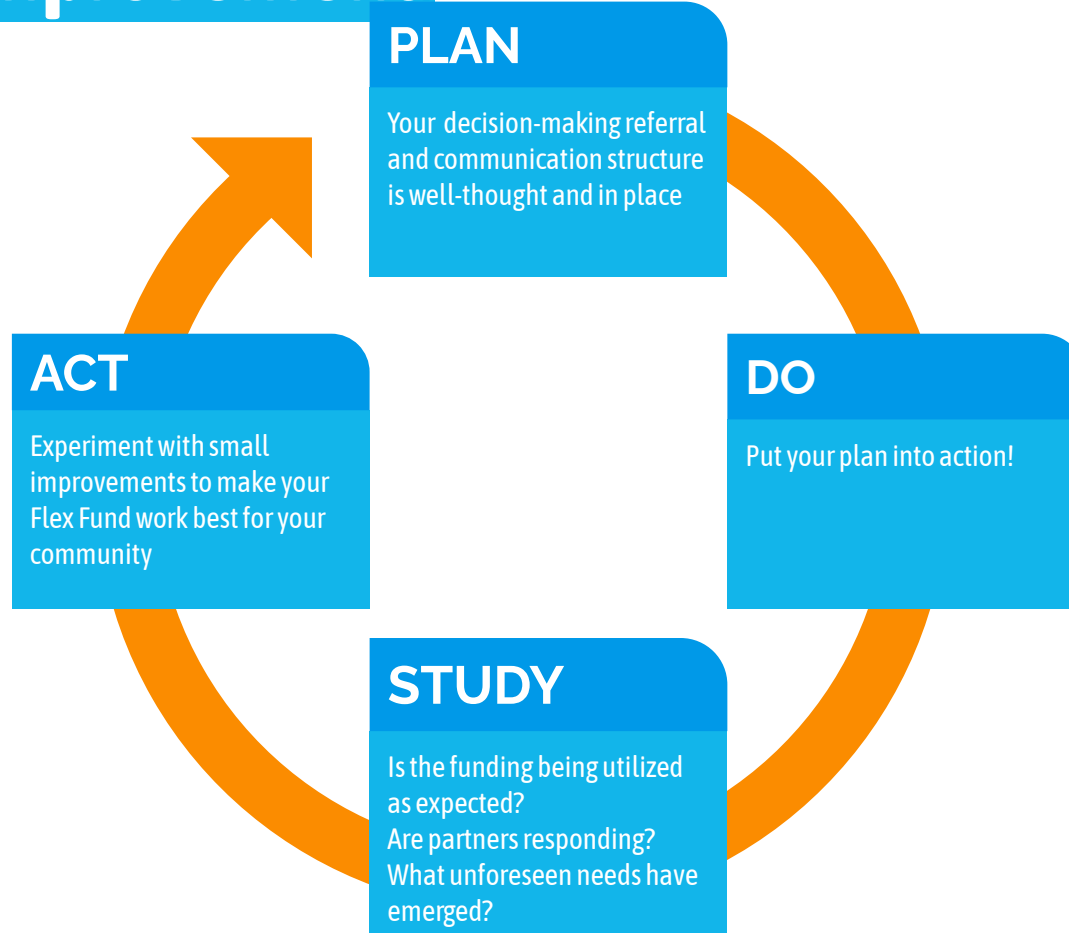
01 Identify a Fiscal Agent & Financial Process

02 Establish Referral & Decision-making Chain

03 Spread the Word

04 Test, Learn, Improve

Continuous Improvement



Peer Advisor: Lightning Round



Dan Hodgkins
Senior Director of Social Work
Preble Street
Portland, ME

Flex Fund Population Focus: Veterans

Flex goal & did/are you accomplish(ing) it:

— Yes! Almost 50% reduction in Veteran Homelessness in Maine. (Over 200 in August 2023 and 109 on last BNL report)

Hardest Flex Fund Lesson Learned: —Start sustainability planning early

Life Most Changed by Flex Funds: —Saved a housing placement of an elderly veteran with Landlord Risk mitigation funds.

Most Positive System Change by Flex Funds: —Using flex funds to support long term Landlord Engagement efforts. NoHomelessVeterans.org

Understanding & Amplifying Impact

Measure Impact

- Track your progress from the start
 - Individual indicators: Number of people, dollars, individual outcomes
 - System-level impact: Consider changes to BFZ Metrics, changes to policy, procedures, ways of working, new resources
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Understand Impact

- Consider qualitative data in addition to the quantitative
 - Collect testimonials, focus groups or satisfaction surveys
 - Use the data to tell the story of your Flex Fund
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Amplify Impact

- Share your learning and outcomes early and often
- Highlight specific outcomes to community and funding partners that demonstrate impact and drive additional resources
- Use storytelling and data visualization to celebrate and share successes