WITT O'BRIEN'S
PART OF THE SEACOR FAMILY

Emergency Rental Assistance Program Implementation Solutions For Rapid Development and Compliant Administration

California State Association of Counties
February 2021

Today's Speakers

WITT O'BRIEN'S PART OF THE SEACOR FAMILY + unqork

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Witt O'Brien's

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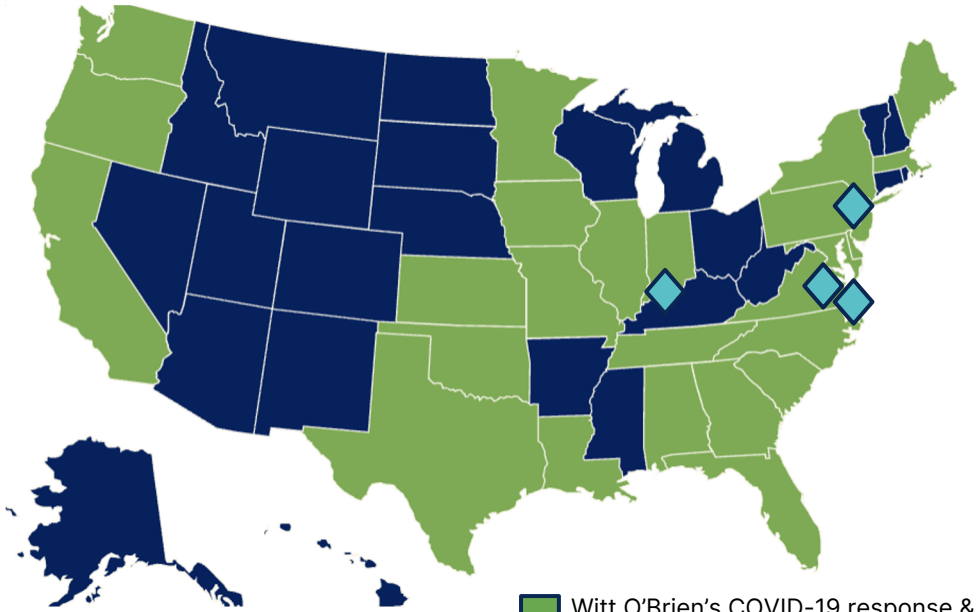
Subject Matter Expert
Witt O'Brien's

Cas Holloway
Head of Public Sector
Unqork

Trusted Name for COVID-19 Response & Grant Management

Assisting over 70 jurisdictions across the nation with a broad range of services centered on compliant, efficient and expedient COVID-19 response programs.

- Unified Testing Strategy Development & Implementation
- Small Business & Economic Stability Support Programs
- Food Security & Supply Chain Stabilization
- Housing Eviction Prevention & Rental Assistance Programs
- Coronavirus Relief Fund (Treasury OIG) reporting and compliance monitoring
- Call Center Support Operations



Witt O'Brien's COVID-19 response & grant management support

Unqork providing rental relief in NYC, DC, Montgomery County, Maryland and Indiana

About the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, SB91 & Other State Requirements

U.S. Treasury Rental Assistance Program

The Program provides flexible funding to local jurisdictions to be utilized for:

+ RENTAL ASSISTANCE + UTILITY ASSISTANCE + OTHER HOUSING NEEDS

Eligibility

- Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19;
- Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- Has a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median.

90% of funding must be utilized for rental, utility assistance or other housing needs
10% may be used for housing stability services and overall grant administration

Priority should be given to applicants whose income is less than 50% of AMI - and - has been unemployed for past 90 days

Emergency Rental Assistance Program & SB91

SB91 High Level:

- Passed January 28, 2021, signed January 29, 2021.
- Extends key tenant and property owner protection provisions provided by AB 3088 (Chapter 37, Statutes of 2020).
- Provides new protections for tenants impacted by COVID-19, including debt treatment and civil procedures.
- Appropriates $1.5 B for the State Rental Assistance Program.

SB91 Funding Distributions:

Counties and Cities with population less than 200k: State reserves allocation based on County/City population for State Administered program

Counties and Cities with population greater than 200k receive direct allocation and may receive State Block Grant if they develop a conforming program

SB 91 Conforming Program Overview

Prioritization:
Must align prioritization of resources as provided in Health and Safety Code Section 50897.1(b), principally prioritizing households at or below 50% AMI, and up to 80% AMI or unemployed for 90 or more days. But in doing so, may provide equal or stronger prioritization to include the following:

- Prioritization by deeper income targeting (i.e. 30% AMI and below);
- Prioritization by rent- burden;
- Prioritization by qualified census tracts;
- Prioritization by property size (i.e. small landlords);
- Other related factors consistent with this intent and need.

Must prioritize rental arrears

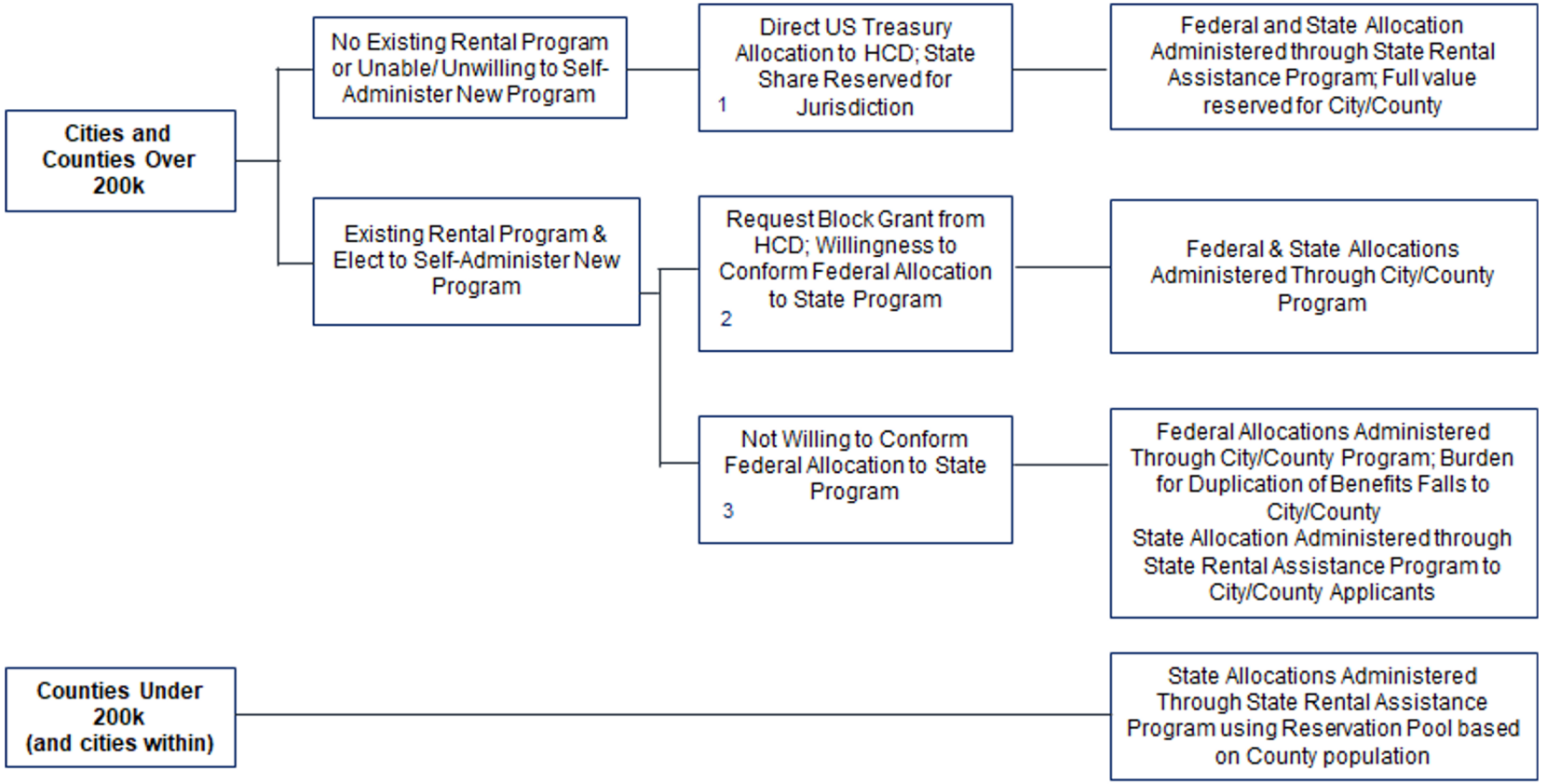
SB 91 Conforming Program Overview

Payments:
Must follow the exact compensation formula as described in the bullets below for rental arrears as provided in SB 91, both for landlord participating and non-participating processes, respectively.

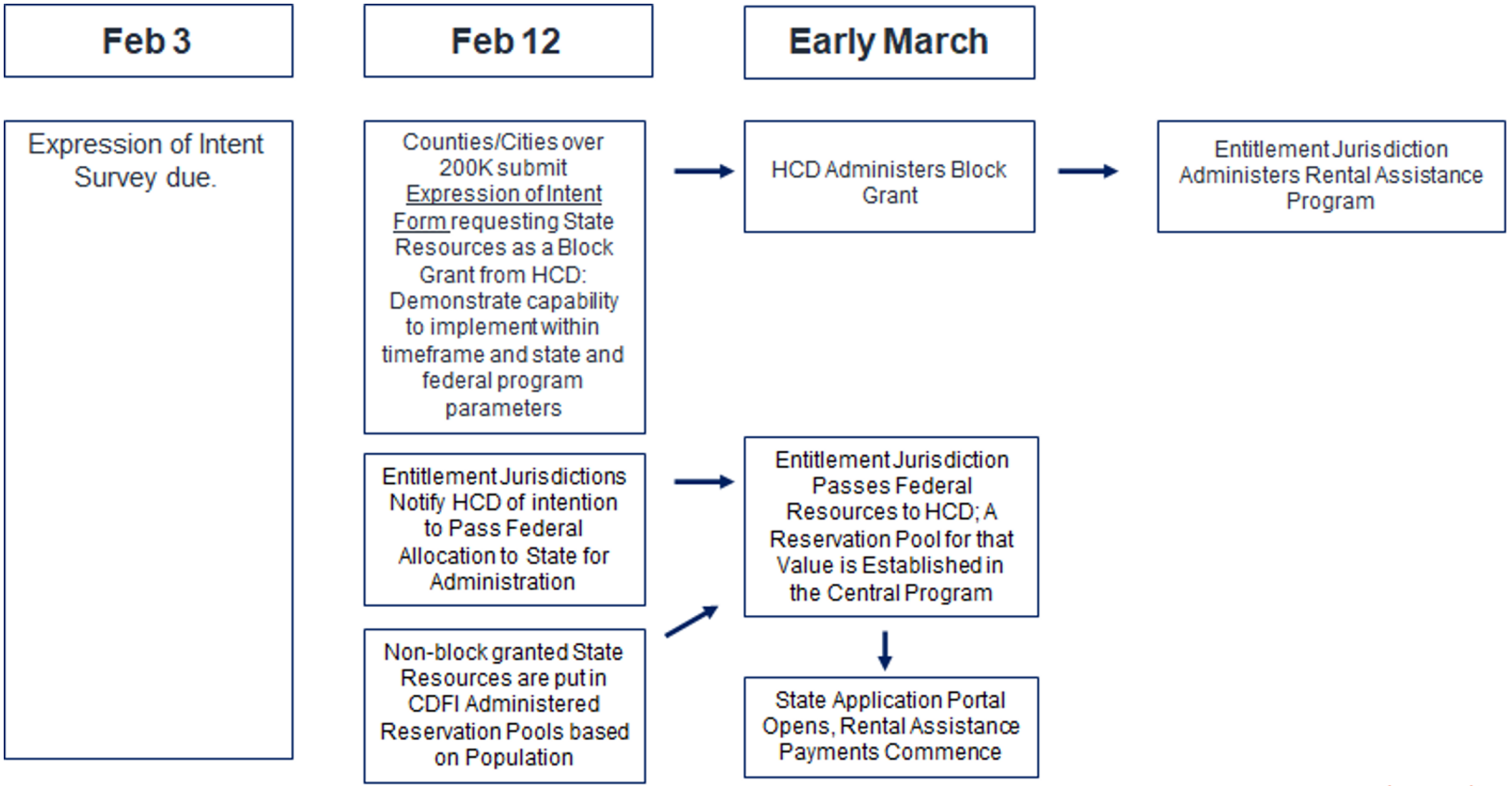
- Compensation shall be exactly 80% of an eligible household's unpaid rental debt from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.
- Non-participatory landlord process pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 50897.1(e), compensation shall be exactly 25% of an eligible household's unpaid rental debt from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.
- Prospective rent payments shall be exactly 25% of an eligible household's monthly rent

A conforming local rental assistance program may not institute additional programmatic requirements that may inhibit participation in the program

Key Decision Points



Opt-in and Block Grant Request Timeline



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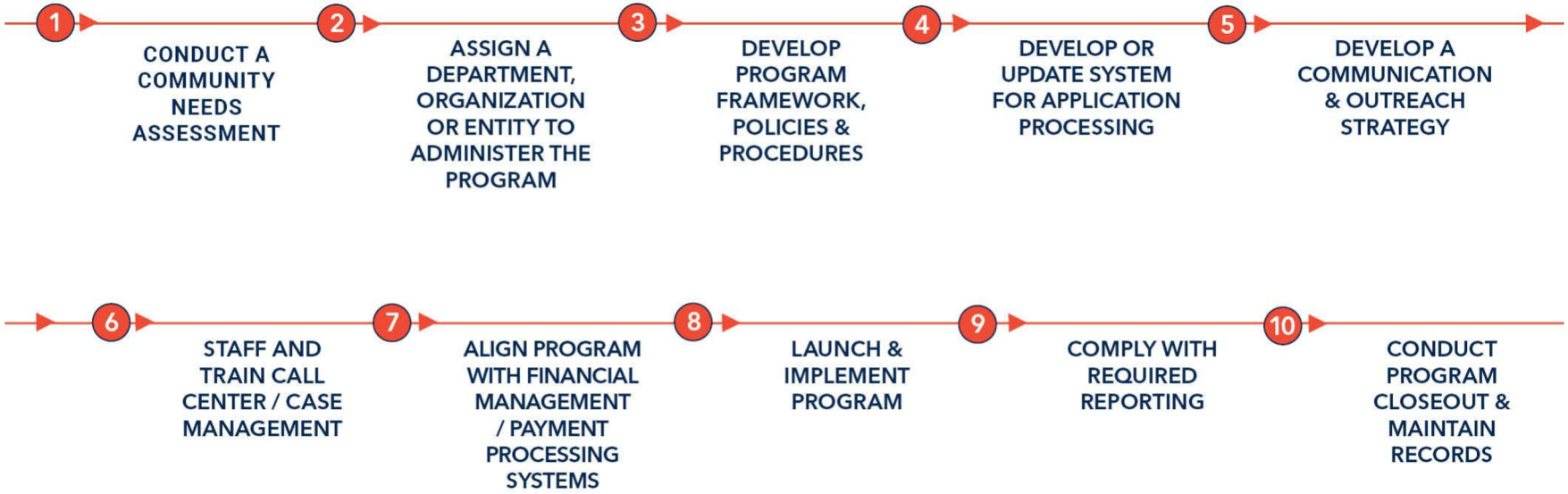
Program Administration Considerations

10 Steps For Administering a Successful Program



Implementation Models

Fully Centralized Operation

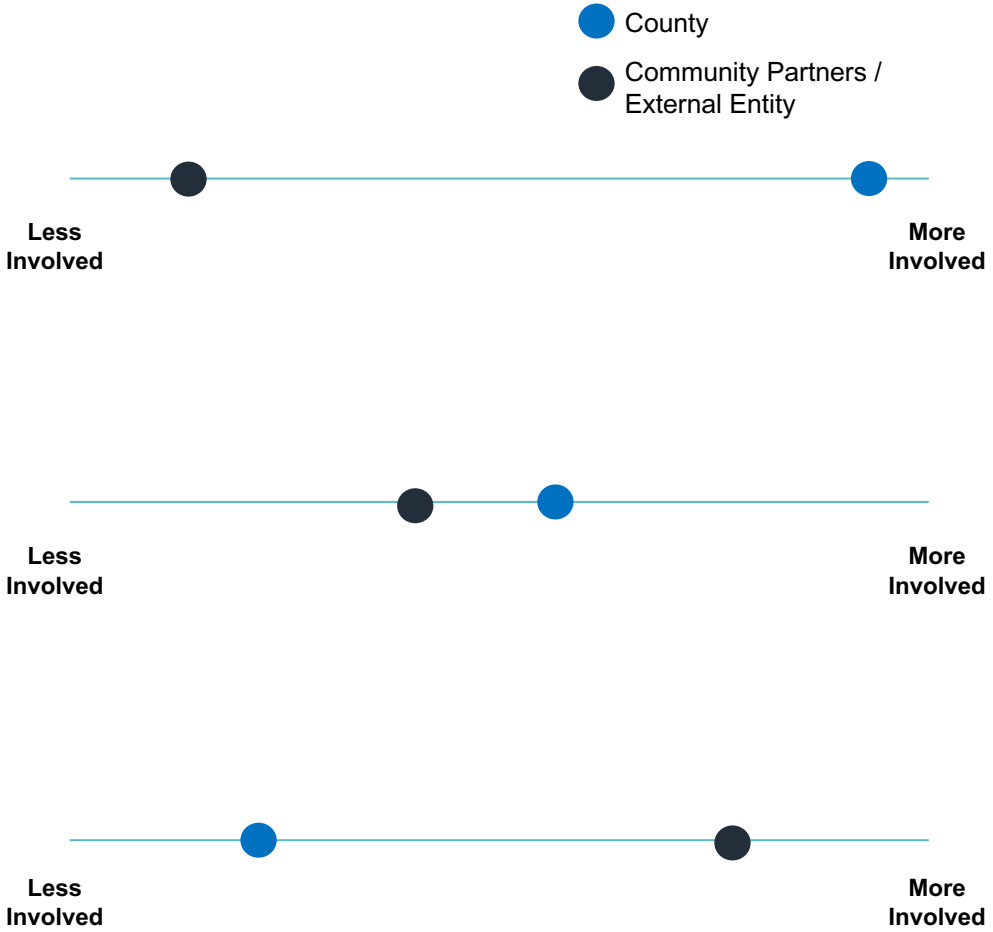
- County Develops Program
- County Leads Community Engagement
- County Performs Application Intake
- County Performs Application Review
- County Determines Awards
- County Issues Payments

Hybrid Community Partner / Centralized Operation

- County Develops Program
- County Utilizes Community Partners / External Entity for Engagement
- Community Partners / External Entity Performs Application Intake
- County Supports Application Review
- County Determines Awards
- County -or- Community Partners Issues Payments

Decentralized Community Partner Delivered

- County works with Community Partners / External Entity to Develop Program
- Community Partners / External Entity Lead Community Engagement
- Community Partners / External Entity Performs Application Review
- Community Partners / External Entity Determine Awards
- Community Partners / External Entity Issue Payments
- County Reconciles Awards and Performs Monitoring



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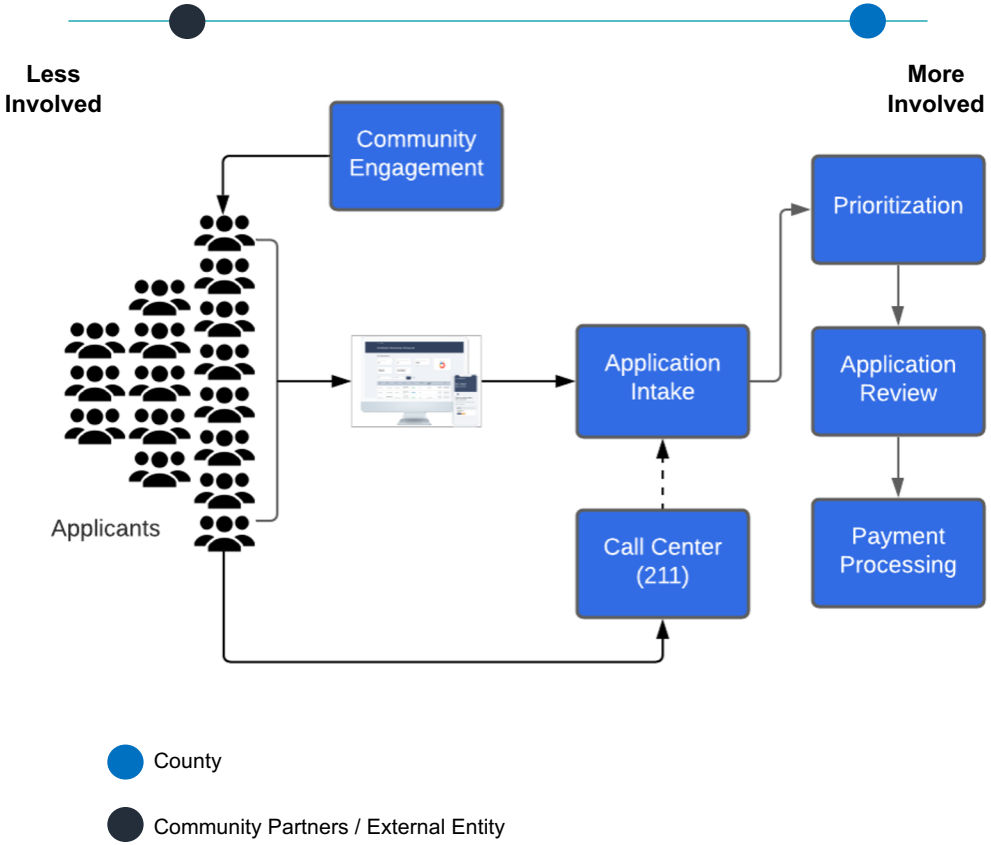

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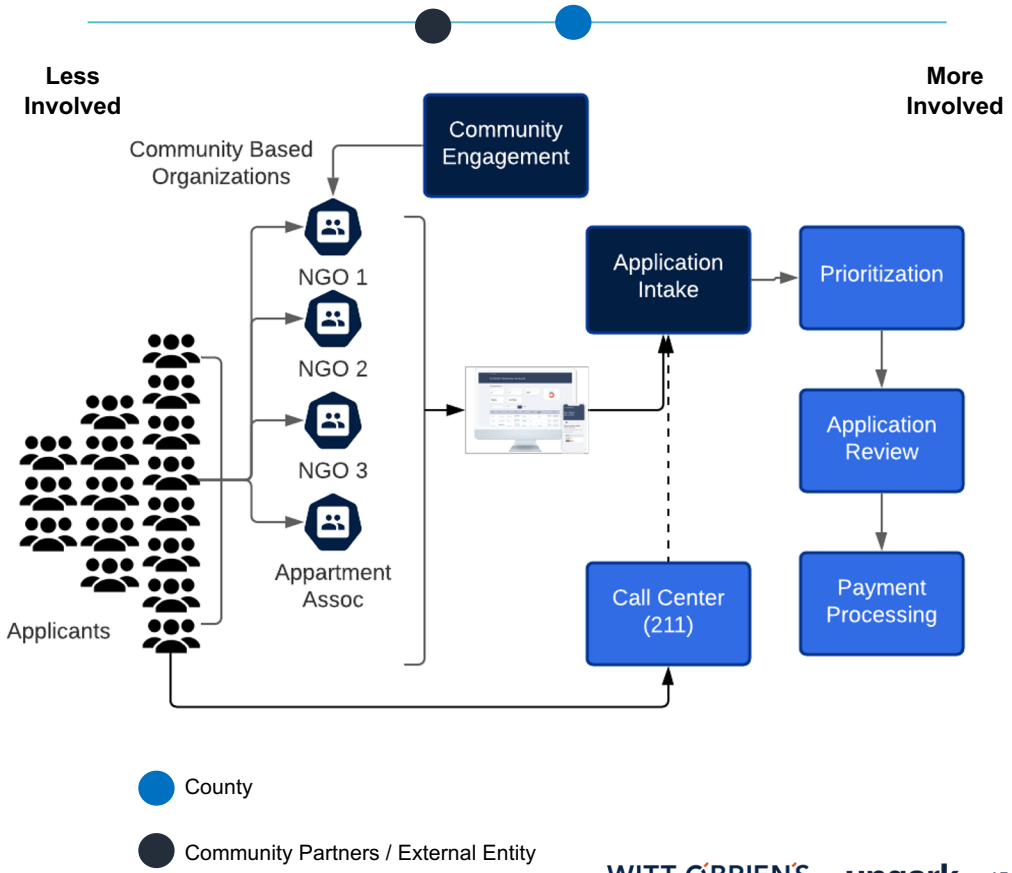

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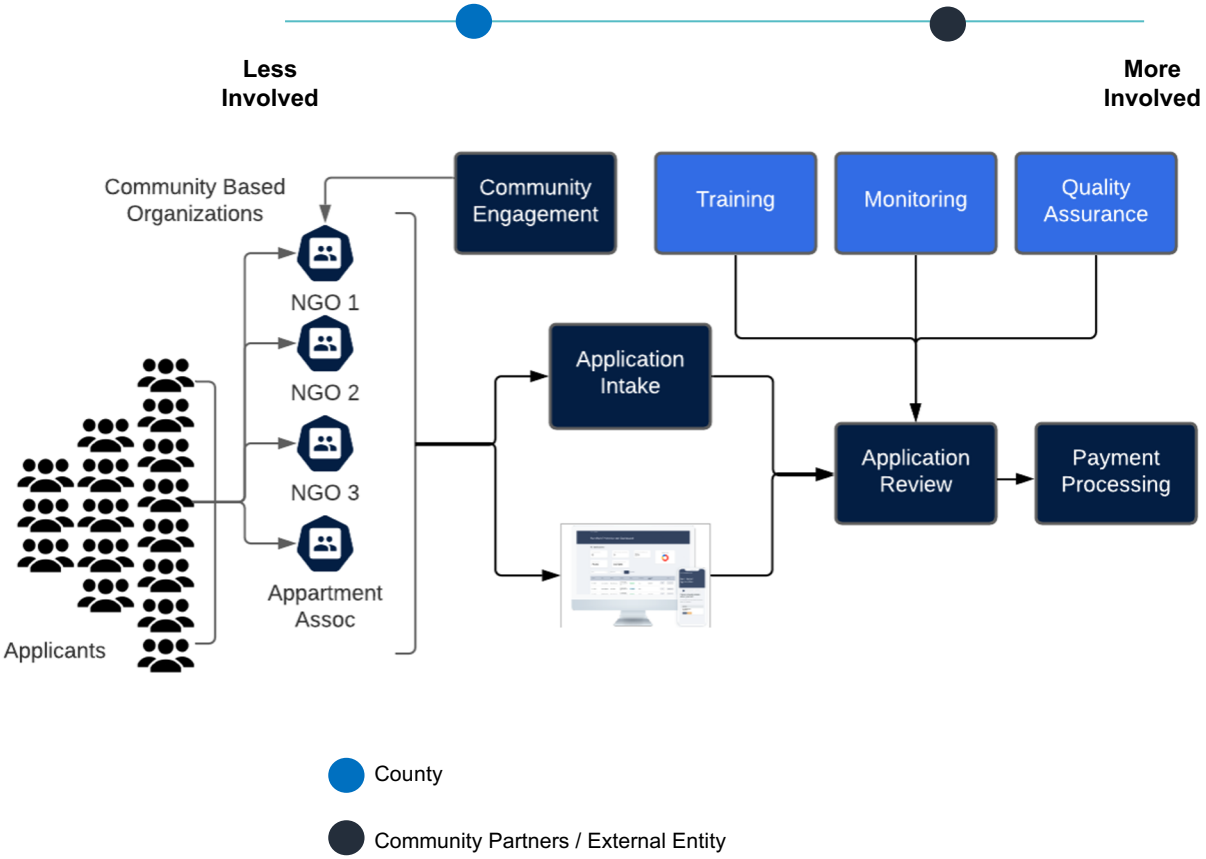


What Model is Right For Me?

Understanding Your Organization's Capacity / Capabilities

Carefully evaluate your organization's ability to manage a complex federal grant program. Don't be deterred by material weaknesses identified in this stage, these are areas to address in your program design/development.

Key components to consider when evaluating your organization's capacity and capabilities:

- Existing in-house capacity to build a scalable organization around or ability to outsource while providing management oversight
- Finance systems adequate to expeditiously process payments, track and monitor transactions and support reporting/audit requirements

What Model is Right For Me?

Leveraging External Entities and/or Community Partners

Utilizing existing County/City agencies or community-based partners may be a good fit for your organization.

Key components to consider when evaluating potential community or external partners capacity and capabilities:

- Existing agency or community-based organization currently managing affordable housing, homelessness or similar programs/initiatives
- Experience in managing grant-funded programs, especially those involving federal funding
- Scalable organization to meet the size of your projected program
- Ability to bridge the gap to groups at highest risk and/or need
- Ability to address language or cultural barriers

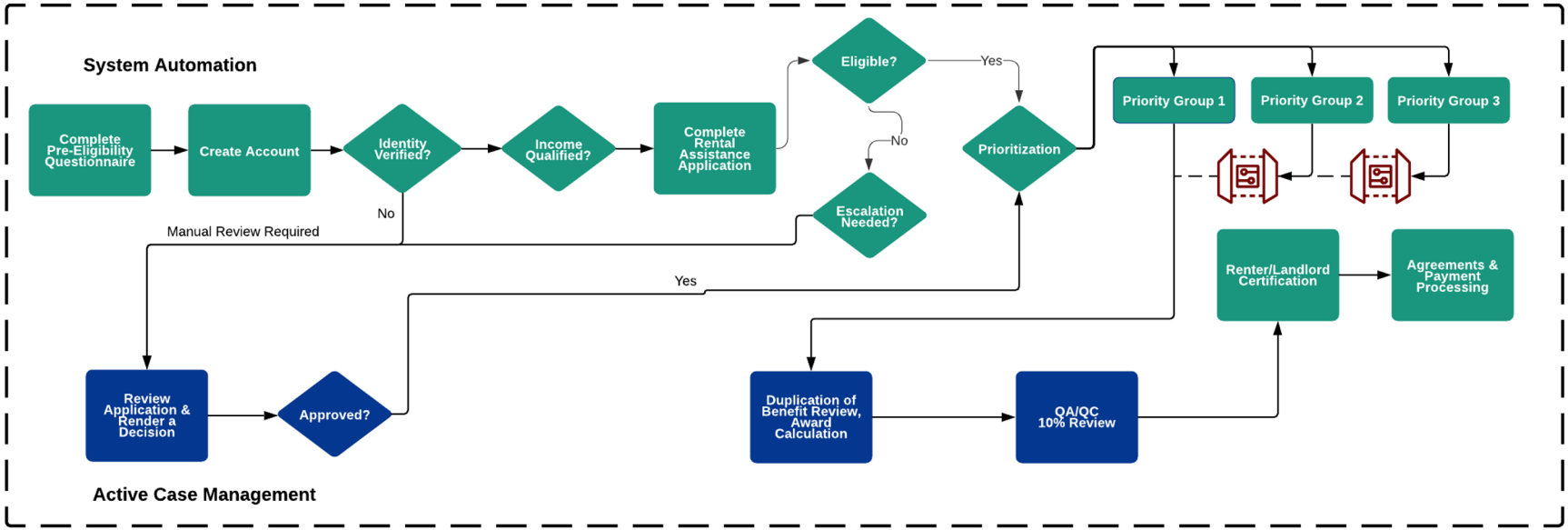
WOB Insight:
Choosing The Right System for Application Processing

Choosing the Right System

One of the first and most critical decisions to be made in running a Rental Assistance program will be selecting the proper system for managing information. While there are a wide range of software solutions to choose from, ideally the system will include many of the following features:

- End-to-end workflow from pre-screening through award determination, including document management and retention that maximizes automation
- Highly secure, scalable system that protects sensitive data
- Fraud detection/duplication of benefits avoidance
- Intuitive, adaptable, customer-friendly interface; notifications (email, SMS, chat) for easy communication and expedited processing; progress tracking
- Data extraction for local use
- Full audit trail and audit capabilities
- Robust KPI tracking, reporting & analytics
- Easy integration with external data sources, legacy systems, and 3rd-party applications for ID validation, payments processing & other services
- Flexibility to accommodate federal requirements, additional local requirements and any changes as the program evolves (extensions, eligibility criteria adjustments, additional funding, etc.)

Leverage System Automation for Streamlined Delivery



1st Point of Engagement - Manual Review for Base Eligibility Criteria

Resolve identity validation issues that did not clear systematic control checks

2nd Point of Engagement – Duplication of Benefit Review, Award Calculation

Engagement occurs after Priority Group 'gate' is released so that Case Management functions are prioritized those with greatest level of need.

3rd Point of Engagement – QA/QC of Validation & Award

10% review of all awards and non-eligible determinations to validate policies are followed consistently and the award calculation is performing as expected

Witt O’Brien’s + Unqork Turnkey Rent Relief

An Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Playbook & Digital Solution for Rapid and Compliant Program Implementation

Unqork + Witt O'Brien's Help You **Provide Relief Quickly** to the Intended Eligible Customers in Need in California

Out-of-the-box solution is **compatible with ERAP** Requirements + **SB91** Requirements to conform to Local Rental Assistance Program & to **California's state program requirements** to meet all conforming requirements for full **program compliance**.

Empowers local California government agencies to effectively prioritize and manage requirements, determine eligibility, manage and resolve issues, and quickly distribute funds.

Allows agencies to **orchestrate highly automated end-to-end workflows** from pre-screening through award determination.

Includes the ability to **integrate with local databases and configure digital experiences for relevant stakeholders** (renters, landlords, administrators, housing specialists, and program auditors).

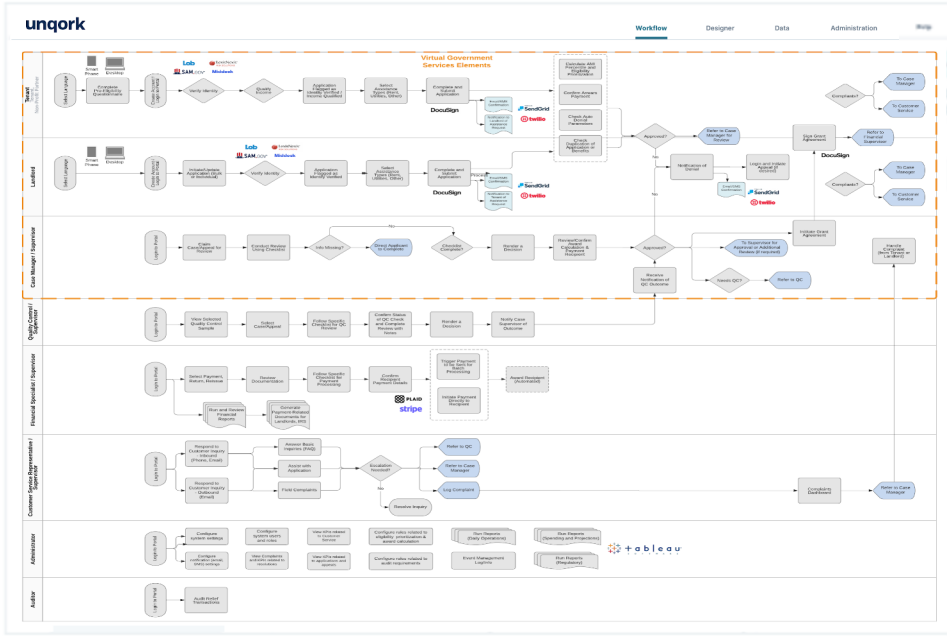
Stakeholders - The people we're here to help

Tenants	Easily apply for relief, upload required documents, check application status and receive assistance during process if needed
Landlords	Easily apply for relief on behalf of multiple tenants, view status of applications across properties, receive funds expediently and be supplied with tax documentation
Case Managers	Prioritize applications, perform reviews of cases, conduct appeals, render decisions and determine award amounts
Quality Control Specialists	Conduct quality checks of an application sample, ensure program compliance and monitor controls to support fraud detection
Financial Administrators	Prepare payments or returns, track spending, review financial reports and complete financial documents (IRS) required for program compliance
Customer Service Agents	Provide a fully accessible experience for all potential applicants seeking assistance by responding to inquiries, assisting with application completion and fielding complaints
Administrators	View KPIs related to the program, run reports for daily operations, past performance and future projections
Auditors	View transactions and data required in order to complete necessary examination of program

End to End Workflow

Conforming Requirements met for SB91 and the State of California

- Tenant Application
- Landlord Application
- Case Management
- Quality Control
- Financial Review
- Customer Service
- Administration
- Audit



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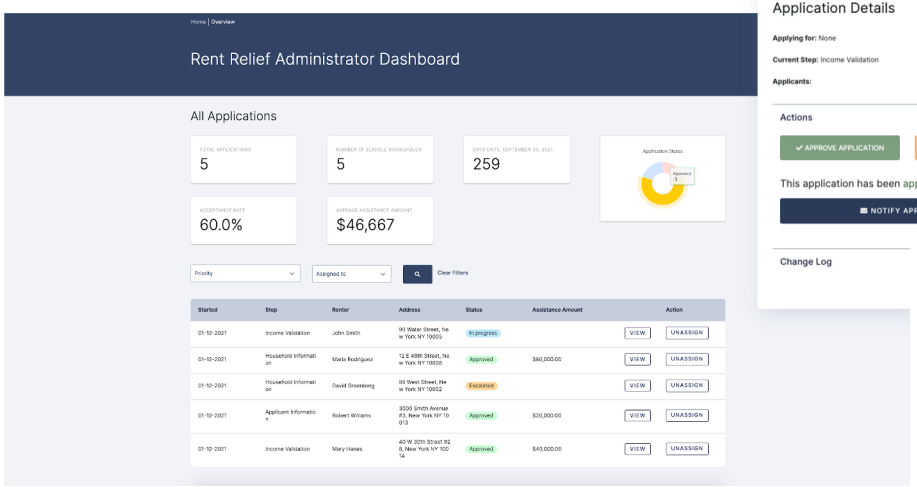
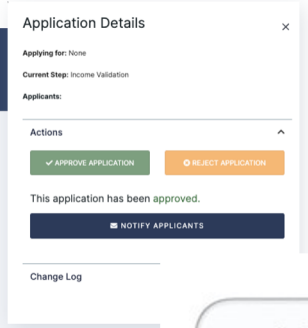
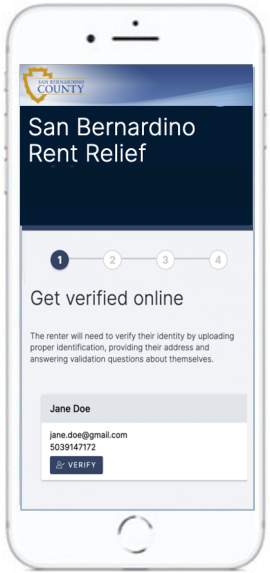
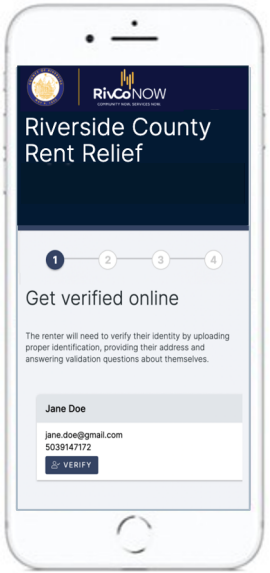
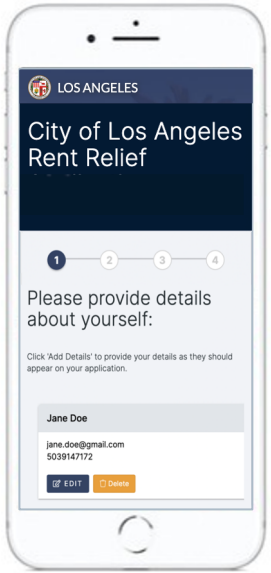
Stakeholder Experience











Application Demo

An Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Playbook & Digital Solution for Rapid and Compliant Program Implementation

Questions?

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- Federal Funding Expertise
- Crisis & Disaster Management
- Public & Stakeholder Communication
- Business & Operations Continuity
- Emergency Operations Center Surge Staffing

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- Virtualized Government Services
- Complex Case Management
- Infrastructure & Operations
- Revenue & Budget Operations
- Accelerated Economic Development

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