§ 45-c. Direct application by eligible applicants. Upon receipt of a copy of the request for proposals issued pursuant to section forty-five-a of this title, an eligible applicant may notify the local social services district in which its eligible project is located of its desire to participate in the single room occupancy support services program. In the event that the local social services district does not submit a proposal pursuant to section forty-five-a of this title, such eligible applicant that has notified the local social services district of its desire to participate may submit an application directly to the commissioner for financial assistance under this title. Criteria to be used by the commissioner in awarding funding directly to such eligible applicants shall include but not be limited to the anticipated need for single room occupancy units within the district where the eligible project is located, and the appropriateness of the support services for the population to be served. Before directly awarding any funding to eligible applicants, the commissioner shall consult with the local social services district where the eligible project is located regarding the need for single room occupancy units within such district, the ability of the eligible project to provide single room occupancy services and any other factors which are necessary to effectively evaluate direct application by eligible projects. When such applications are approved, the commissioner, within the amounts appropriated under this title, and subject to the limitations set forth in this section and section forty-five-d of this title, is authorized to enter into contracts with eligible applicants, to provide financial assistance in the form of grants for eligible costs.