



## **WESTERN PA CONTINUUM OF CARE (PA-601) WRITTEN STANDARDS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE**

**Approved by Western PA CoC Governing Board, March 15, 2019**

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The following written standards for providing assistance in the Western PA CoC were developed in conjunction with ESG recipients in order to:

- Establish community-wide expectations for the operations of projects within the CoC
- Ensure that the system is transparent to service users and providers
- Create consistency and coordination among projects
- Further the CoC's ability to meet system-wide goals

This document provides the following:

- HUD's requirements for Written Standards under both CoC and ESG
- Standards for all program types funded under CoC and ESG
- Program specific standards, both those required by HUD and additional CoC identified standards

### **HUD's Requirements for Written Standards:**

Both the CoC and ESG Interim Rules identify specific requirements for Written Standards for programs that utilize these funds. The following are required to be included in the CoC's Written Standards:

#### **Continuum of Care (CoC) Funded Projects – Required Written Standards**

The following are the requirements for Written Standards for Continuum of Care (CoC) Funded Projects per 24 CFR Part 578: The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition Interim Rule. They are addressed under the relevant project types:

578.7(a)(9) In consultation with recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area, establish and consistently follow written standards for providing Continuum of Care assistance. At a minimum, these written standards must include:

(i) Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals' and families' eligibility for assistance under this part;

(ii) Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance;

(iii) Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive rapid rehousing assistance;

(iv) Standards for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid rehousing assistance;

(v) Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance;

## **Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) Funded Projects – Required Written Standards**

The following are the requirements for Written Standards for Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) Funded Projects per 24 CFR Part 576(3): Emergency Solutions Grants Program Interim Rule:

### **Applicable to ALL ESG program types:**

(i) Standard policies and procedures for evaluation of individuals' and families' eligibility under ESG

(v) Coordination with the below referenced programs and resources is required of all ESG funded programs:

- Coordination with other targeted homeless services: Per 24CFR576.400(b) ESG funded programs are required to coordinate with other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness in the area covered by the CoC to provide a strategic, community-wide system to prevent and end homelessness for the CoC. A list of these programs is provided in **Appendix A**.
- System and program coordination with mainstream resources: Per 24 CFR576.400(c) ESG funded programs are required to coordinate to the maximum extent practicable, ESG-funded activities with mainstream housing, health, social services, employment, education, and youth programs for households experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Examples of these programs are provided in **Appendix A**.

### **Applicable to HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RAPID REHOUSING:**

These requirements are addressed under each project type.

(vi) Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible families and individuals will receive homelessness prevention assistance and which eligible families and individuals will receive rapid re-housing assistance.

(vii) Policies and procedures for determining what percentage or amount of rent and utilities costs each program participant must pay while receiving homelessness prevention or rapid-re-housing assistance.

(viii) Standards for determining how long a particular program participant will be provided with rental assistance and whether and how the amount of that assistance will be adjusted over time.

(ix) Standards for determining the type, amount, and duration of housing stabilization and/or relocation services to provide to a program participant, including the limits, if any, on the homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance that each program participant may receive, such as the maximum amount of assistance, maximum number of months the program participant receives assistance; or the maximum number of times the program participant may receive assistance.

### **Applicable to EMERGENCY SHELTERS:**

(iii) Policies and procedures for admission, diversion, and discharge by emergency shelters assisted under ESG, including standards regarding length of stay, if any, and safeguards to meet the safety and shelter needs of special populations, e.g., victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and individuals and families who have the highest barriers to housing and are likely to be homeless the longest.

(iv) Policies and procedures for assessing, prioritizing, and reassessing individuals' and families' needs for essential services related to emergency shelter

### **Applicable to STREET OUTREACH:**

(II) Standards for targeting and providing essential services to street outreach

## **STANDARDS FOR ALL PROGRAMS:**

The following standards are applicable to all ESG and CoC funded projects in the CoC:

### **COMPLIANCE WITH HUD REGULATIONS:**

- All programs must operate in accordance with program regulations.
  - CoC funded programs must operate in compliance with the CoC Interim Rule: 24 CFR Part 578, [https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule\\_FormatVersion.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule_FormatVersion.pdf)
  - ESG funded programs must operate in compliance with the ESG Interim Rule: 24 CFR Part 576, [https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConformingAmendments.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConformingAmendments.pdf)
  
- All programs must evaluate and document individuals' and family's eligibility per the HEARTH Homeless Definition Final Rule, [https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_HomelessDefinition\\_FinalRule.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf). The specific Category/ies of homeless eligibility are provided below with each program type.
  
- All programs, with the exception of DV programs, must enter data into PA HMIS accurately and in a timely manner as defined in the PA HMIS Data Quality and Functionality Plan found at <http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Appendix-B-PA-HMIS-Data-Quality-and-Functionality-Plan-v.1.0.pdf>. DV programs must enter data into a comparable data base accurately and in a timely manner and make their aggregate data available to the CoC for planning, monitoring and ranking. In the Western PA CoC, ETO is the recognized comparable data base for DV programs.

- All CoC funded Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing programs and ESG funded Rapid Rehousing programs are required to only accept referrals and fill vacancies and/or turnover units using the Coordinated Entry Housing Prioritization List. Per the Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedures found at <http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Coordinated-Entry-Policies-and-Procedures-Approved-6-27-19.pdf>
- Program enrollment should be based on eligibility and Coordinated Entry prioritization (for program types listed above), **not other factors such as residency requirements.**
- Programs must be operated in accordance with the CoC's policy for Housing First, per the Western PA COC Program Operating Standards found at <http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Western-PA-CoC-Program-Operating-Standards-FINAL-11-4-16.pdf>.
- For programs that serve households with children:
  - A staff person must be designated as the educational liaison that will ensure that children are enrolled in school, connected to appropriate services in the community, including early childhood programs such as Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and McKinney Vento education services.
  - Programs are prohibited from denying assistance to or separating members of a family with children based on gender or age.
- Programs must have written policies and procedures regarding program operations and must consistently apply them to all participants.
- All programs must operate in compliance with the 2012 Final Rule for Equal Access in HUD Programs – Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/02/03/2012-2343/equal-access-to-housing-in-hud-programs-regardless-of-sexual-orientation-or-gender-identity>) which ensures that HUD's core programs, including those funded under CoC and ESG are open to all eligible individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status and in accordance with the 2016 Final Rule to Ensure Equal Access to Housing and Services Regardless of Gender Identity which further addresses barriers faced by transgender and gender nonconforming persons when accessing single-sex facilities (<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Equal-Access-Final-Rule-2016.pdf>).
- Programs must have a formal procedure for terminating assistance to a participant that recognizes the rights of the participant(s) involved:
  - Eviction by a landlord in a scattered site program should not result in termination from the ESG/CoC program.
  - Programs must use judgement and examine all extenuating circumstances in determining that a violation should result in termination
  - Every effort should be made to allow the participant to remain in the program
  - Termination does not preclude assistance at a future date.

- Termination should not result in return to homelessness, instead households should be referred back to the CoC's Coordinated Entry system for placement in an appropriate program.

Further per 24 CFR 576.402 – Terminating Assistance: While this is in the ESG Regulations, this should also apply to CoC funded projects.

(a) In general: If a program participant violates program requirements, the recipient or subrecipient may terminate the assistance in accordance with a formal process established by the recipient or subrecipient that recognizes the rights of individuals affected. The recipient or subrecipient must exercise judgement and examine all extenuating circumstances in determining when violations warrant termination so that a program participant's assistance is terminated only in the most severe cases.

(b) Program participants receiving rental assistance or housing relocation and stabilization service. To terminate rental assistance or housing relocation and stabilization services to a program participant, the required formal process, at a minimum, must consist of:

(1) Written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination;

(2) A review of the decision, in which the program participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision; and

(3) Prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.

(c) Ability to provide further assistance. Termination under this section does not bar the recipient or subrecipient from providing further assistance at a later date to the same family or individual.

- Programs must make known that use of the facilities and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis, in a manner that furthers fair housing in accordance with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity laws and regulations. Among the strategies for addressing this standard are: putting the Fair Housing logo on all documents, making Fair Housing brochures/flyers available to all who inquire about programs and enroll in programs, and hanging posters in agency offices.
- Programs may not engage in explicitly religious activities.
- Programs must follow the CoC's Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking found at <http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Western-PA-CoC-VAWA-Emergency-Transfer-Plan-Policy.pdf>

Further, per required VAWA protections, the Western PA CoC has established the following program requirements:

For families receiving tenant-based rental assistance, the following procedures will be followed for non-transferring family member(s), if the family separates in order to affect an emergency transfer, per the Western PA CoC Program Operating Standards found at <http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Western-PA-CoC-Program-Operating-Standards-FINAL-11-4-16.pdf>.

- For families living in units that are otherwise assisted, the required policies must provide that for program participants who qualify for an emergency transfer, the individual or family shall have priority over all other applicants for rental assistance, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing projects funded through the Continuum of Care provided that the individual or family meets all eligibility criteria required by Federal law or regulation or HUD NOFA; and the individual or family meets any additional criteria or preferences established in accordance with Fair Housing 24 CFR 578.93(b)(1), (4), (6) or (7) ([https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule\\_FormattedVersion.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule_FormattedVersion.pdf)). The individual or family shall not be required to meet any other eligibility criteria or preferences for the project. The individual or family shall retain their original homeless or chronically homeless status for the purposes of the transfer.
- All CoC and ESG funded programs should take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by individuals with limited English proficiency, regardless of the language spoken. Meaningful access may entail providing language assistance services, including oral and written translation, where necessary. Grantees must follow the requirements outlined in 24 CFR §576.407(b) ([https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConformingAmendments.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConformingAmendments.pdf)). HUD published Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Requirements Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons in the Federal Register on January 22, 2007 (72 F.R. 2732), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/11/28/2014-27960/guidance-to-federal-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-the-title-vi-prohibition-against>)
- Programs in which participants are responsible for utility payments must operate in accordance with Notice CPD-17-11 issued October 23, 2017, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-17-11-Determining-Program-Participant-Rent-Contribution-in-the-CoC-Program.pdf>
- Programs must coordinate with other targeted homeless services and with mainstream resources. For the Western PA CoC, this may occur through various mechanisms including but not limited to: participation in local housing/homeless coalitions, participation in the Regional Homeless Advisory Board (RHAB) or its subcommittees, participation in the CoC; through referral to other targeted homeless assistance programs and through maximizing program participants' access to mainstream resources. A list of programs and examples of mainstream resources are provided in **Appendix A**.

- All programs are expected to strive to meet CoC Performance goals per the Western Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Monitoring Plan (<http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/western-pa-coc-monitoring-plan-approved-6-29-17/>) and provided below under Standards by Program Type.

## COMPLIANCE WITH COC POLICIES:

- Programs should involve households in decisions about what they need to end their homelessness. This programming and planning should be respectful, incorporate strengths-based approaches and consumer choice.
- All programs are expected to strive to meet CoC Performance goals per the Western Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Monitoring Plan (<http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/western-pa-coc-monitoring-plan-approved-6-29-17/>) and provided below under Standards by Program Type.
- Case management should, at a minimum facilitate the following:
  - Linkage to community-based services per the Housing Stability Plan
  - Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream benefits:
    - Transportation assistance
    - Assistance with enrollment in income and non-income benefits
    - Follow-up at least annually to ensure benefits are received and renewed
    - Ensure access to SSI/SSDI technical assistance
  - For scattered site programs, assist with housing location, lease negotiation, determining rent reasonableness, and inspection for HUD Housing Quality Standards

**RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PROGRAMS:** All programs should maintain records in keeping with the following basic standards. In addition, program providers must maintain documentation as required by the specific program regulations:

Participant Recordkeeping Requirements: Programs must have written confidentiality/privacy standards with respect to their files, information sharing and personally identifying data maintained in HMIS. A notice should be made available to participants upon intake and upon request and:

- Records containing personally identifying information must be kept secure and confidential
- Documentation of homelessness (per HUD guidelines for program type)
- A record of services and assistance provided to each participant
- Documentation of program entrance through Coordinated Entry, including common assessment tool score and other factors used to determine priority, vulnerability and housing placement

Financial Recordkeeping Requirements:

- Documentation of all costs charged to the grant
- Documentation that funds were spent on allowable costs
- Documentation of the receipt and use of program income

- Documentation of compliance with expenditure limits and deadlines for expenditure
- Retain copies of all procurement contracts as applicable
- Documentation of amount, source and use of matching resources

Records must be retained for amount of time prescribed by applicable funding source

- ESG requirements provided in 24 CFR 576.500 - Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements, [https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConfomingAmendments.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConfomingAmendments.pdf)
- CoC requirements provided in 24 CFR 578.103 Recordkeeping Requirements, [https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule\\_FormattedVersion.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule_FormattedVersion.pdf)

## STANDARDS BY PROGRAM TYPE:

### Rapid Rehousing (RRH):

**The standards adopted for Rapid Rehousing will apply to programs funded under both the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG) and the Continuum of Care Program (CoC) unless otherwise noted.**

Rapid Rehousing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid Rehousing assistance is offered without preconditions — like employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety — and the resources and services provided are tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Per the Western PA CoC *Monitoring Plan* (<http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/western-pa-coc-monitoring-plan-approved-6-29-17/>), the CoC has established the following performance goals for Rapid Rehousing Programs:

- At least 81% of households served under a Rapid Rehousing program will maintain their housing or exit to another permanent housing placement.
- At least 94% of households served under a Rapid Rehousing program should not become homeless again within a year and 87% should not become homeless again within 24 months.
- At least 45% of households served under a Rapid Rehousing program will increase their income

Per the Western PA CoC *Strategic Plan* (<http://www.pennsylvaniacoc.org/western-pa-coc-strategic-plan-final-approved-6-29-17/>), Rapid Rehousing programs should contribute to reducing the length of time households remain homeless.

- The CoC established the goal that by 2021, households should move into permanent housing within an average of 50 days, with a long-term goal of 30 days.



Core Components: Both CoC and ESG funded Rapid Rehousing programs must incorporate the following core components:

- Provide housing locator services. This includes:
  - Recruitment of landlords to provide housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness
  - Provide education and outreach to landlords to address potential barriers to their participation
  - Assist households to find and secure appropriate rental housing. This may include such assistance as developing lists of participating landlords and rental units and accompanying participants on their housing search
  - Help individuals and families negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords
- Provide rent and move-in assistance: provide assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits and rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing
- Provide Rapid Rehousing case management and services to:
  - Help individuals and families experiencing homelessness address issues that may impede access to housing, such as credit history, arrears and legal issues.
  - Make appropriate and time-limited services and supports available to families and individuals to allow them to stabilize quickly in permanent housing.
  - Provide or assist the household with connections to resources that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals
  - Ensure that services provided are client-directed, respectful of individuals' rights to self-determination, and voluntary.
- Rental units assisted with CoC Rental Assistance payments must meet Housing Quality Standards per 24 CFR Part 982 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title24-vol4/pdf/CFR-2012-title24-vol4-sec982-401.pdf>) and those assisted with ESG Rental Assistance payments must meet Minimum Habitability Standards per 24 CFR 576.403, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/ESG-Emergency-Shelter-and-Permanent-Housing-Standards.pdf>
- Unit rent may exceed Fair Market Rent (24 CFR part 888) but it may not exceed Rent Reasonableness (24 CFR 982.507). This means that a recipient or subrecipient is allowed to pay rents up to the rent reasonable amount even if this is higher than the FMR. If rent reasonableness rates are lower than FMR, the maximum allowable contract rent amount is still capped at rent reasonableness rates
- No fees can be imposed on program participants beyond payment of rent.

Eligible Participants: Households experiencing homelessness under the following Categories are eligible for services under Rapid Rehousing. The Homeless Definition Final Rule is found at found at [https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_HomelessDefinition\\_FinalRule.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf)

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

(Note: currently under ESG, households must also meet the requirements of Category 1 and for CoC funded Rapid Rehousing funded prior to 2015, households must also meet the requirements of Category 1.)

Households served through HUD funded Transitional Housing are not eligible for CoC funded Rapid Rehousing upon exit, however, they are eligible for ESG funded Rapid Rehousing if they have no other resources.

For ESG funded Rapid Rehousing, the Documentation of Homelessness Checklist must be completed and uploaded into HMIS prior to enrollment of a household into a Rapid Rehousing Program (see **Appendix B**).

The following are the required Rapid Rehousing Standards under both the CoC Program and the ESG Program.

### **Required Rapid Rehousing Written Standards:**

#### **Amount of rent payments**

- Households pay a minimum of 30% of their adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities. However, at the discretion of each program, tenant's share of the rent may change over time, with the goal of their attaining housing stability at the end of assistance.
  - If, under the terms of the lease, the tenant is responsible for paying their own utilities, grantees must follow the requirements for utility payments and reimbursement per Notice: CPD-17-11, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-17-11-Determining-Program-Participant-Rent-Contribution-in-the-CoC-Program.pdf/>.
- Income is reassessed at least quarterly and rental payments adjusted as appropriate.

#### **Prioritization**

- All referrals to Rapid Rehousing must come through Coordinated Entry
- The Western PA CoC has identified the following prioritization policy in its Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures:

All CoC and ESG funded projects are required to prioritize individuals and families with the longest history of homelessness and with the most severe service needs for all available CoC resources. The determination of severe service need will be based on the score created from the Coordinated Entry Assessment tool. A higher score demonstrates a higher service need. Priority populations (as designated by the CoC) are also weighted in order to ensure higher placement on the prioritization list. These currently are:

- Chronically Homeless
- Families with Children
- Veterans
- Youth

- Domestic Violence
  - In the event that two or more homeless households within the same geographic area are identically prioritized for the next available unit, and each household is also eligible for that unit, the program should select the household that first presented for assistance in the determination of which household receives a referral to the next available unit.

### **Length of Time Assistance Provided**

Households are expected to exit the program as quickly as possible with a goal of 12 months or less. Recertifications/assessments should be conducted every 3 months. Extensions beyond 12 months need to be based on the HUD required Annual Assessments, which are also entered into HMIS. The maximum length of rental assistance is 24 months during any 3-year period.

### **Additional Rapid Rehousing Case Management Standards Adopted by the CoC:**

- Case managers work with households to develop a Housing Stability Plan (See **Appendix C** for Housing Stability Plan Templates – Projects should choose from among these formats)
- A minimum of monthly case management meetings are required, with at least quarterly meetings in-the household’s home or in a mutually agreed-upon community setting.
- The Housing Stability Plan should be reviewed monthly and revised, at a minimum, every 3 months
- Discharge planning should start upon program entry with regular discussions about moving towards maintaining housing stability without a rental subsidy or with a permanent subsidy resource such as Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, affordable housing developments, etc. (See **Appendix D** for Sample questions to use to encourage progress)

### **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):**

Permanent Supportive Housing is community-based housing without a designated length of stay. It provides housing assistance and supportive services to assist program participants to maintain their housing stability. Under the CoC Interim Rule, PSH can only provide assistance to individuals with a disability and families in which one adult or child has a disability.

The standards adopted for Permanent Supportive Housing will apply to programs funded under the Continuum of Care Program (CoC).

Per the *Western PA CoC Monitoring Plan*, the CoC has established the following performance goals for Permanent Supportive Housing Programs:

- At least 95% of households served under a Permanent Supportive Housing program will maintain their housing or exit to another permanent housing placement.
- At least 94% of households served under a Permanent Supportive Housing program should not become homeless again within a year and 91% should not become homeless again within 24 months.

- At least 40% of households served under a Permanent Supportive Housing program will increase their income

Per the Western PA CoC *Strategic Plan*, Permanent Supportive Housing programs should contribute to reducing the length of time households remain homeless. The CoC established the goal that by 2021, households should move into permanent housing within an average of 50 days, with a long-term goal of 30 days.

**Core Components:** Permanent Supportive Housing must incorporate the following core components:

- Households must be prioritized through Coordinated Entry in accordance with HUD’s most current Notice on *Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing* (CPD-16-11 is the operational Notice at the time of the development of this Plan)
- Support services must be made available to program participants, but they may not be required for continued program eligibility
- Tenants must have a lease for at least one year which is automatically renewable for a term of at least one month and only terminable for cause

**Eligible Participants:** Households experiencing homelessness under the following Categories are eligible for services under Permanent Supportive Housing:

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic

AND

At least one member of the household must have a disability

Note: 100% of CoC funded Permanent Supportive Housing units are chronic dedicated. This means that they should first be made available to a household that meets the chronically homeless definition. If there are no chronically homeless households choosing to occupy a particular PSH unit, it may then be rented to a non-chronically homeless household per the above referenced Notice on *Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing* and summarized below.

## **Required Permanent Supportive Housing Written Standards:**

### **Prioritization**

- All CoC funded PSH in the Western PA CoC is dedicated to chronically homeless households.
- Referrals to Permanent Supportive Housing must come through Coordinated Entry
- The Western PA Coordinated Entry prioritizes households experiencing chronic homelessness based on the length of time in which an individual or family has resided in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or emergency shelter and the severity of the individual’s or family’s service needs in accordance with HUD Notice CPD-16-11, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/notice-cpd-16-11-prioritizing-persons-experiencing-chronic-homelessness-and-other-vulnerable-homeless-persons-in-psh.pdf/>.

- In the event that there are no chronically homeless individuals and families within the Western PA CoC who are willing to accept a unit in the geographic area where there is availability, the following order of priority will be used in filling that unit:
  - Households with a disability with long periods of episodic homelessness and severe service needs
  - Households with a disability with severe service needs
  - Households with a disability coming from places not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter without severe service needs
  - Households with a disability coming from Transitional Housing who prior to residing in the transitional housing lived in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter or safe haven. This includes households residing in transitional housing who were fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, even if they did not come from places not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter prior to residing in transitional housing.
- In accordance with the forthcoming Coordinated Entry policy/procedure for transitioning households from Rapid Re-Housing to Permanent Supportive Housing, households in Rapid Re-Housing who are both eligible for PSH and in need of non-time limited supportive housing will be eligible to transfer from RRH to PSH.

**CoC Established Program Standards:** in addition to the above and the requirement of compliance with the CoC Interim Rule, the Western PA CoC has established the following standards for Permanent Supportive Housing Programs:

- A minimum of quarterly case management meetings is required with greater frequency as needed, especially during the first year of program participation. In-home meetings are encouraged.
- Each program participant should be assessed at least annually to determine whether they are able to move from Permanent Supportive Housing to other permanent housing without supports, either subsidized or market rate in order to make PSH resources available for those with the greatest need for supported housing. If it is determined that it is feasible for a participant to exit from PSH, program staff should support them in this transition, including assistance with identifying alternative housing and connection to community supports. To support households transitioning from PSH, program staff are encouraged to assist program participants in signing up for all appropriate subsidized housing waiting lists, including: Housing Choice Vouchers, Public Housing, Senior Housing, and other privately-owned assisted housing.
  - Each potential program participant must have documentation of disability prior to program enrollment.

## **Transitional Housing (TH):**

Transitional Housing facilitates the movement of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing.

The standards adopted for Transitional Housing will apply to programs funded under the Continuum of Care Program (CoC) and those “grandfathered” under ESG.

Per the Western PA CoC *Monitoring Plan*, the CoC has established the following performance goals for Transitional Housing Programs:

- At least 73% of households served under a Transitional Housing program will exit to permanent housing.
- At least 92% of households served under a Transitional Housing program should not become homeless again within a year and 86% should not become homeless again within 24 months.
- At least 48% of households served under a Transitional Housing program will increase their income

Per the Western PA CoC *Strategic Plan*, Transitional Housing programs should contribute to reducing the length of time households remain homeless.

- The CoC established the goal that by 2021, households should move into permanent housing within an average of 89 days.

Per the 2016 System Performance Measures, the average length of stay in Transitional Housing was 214 days. Per the Western Pa CoC *Monitoring Plan*, the goal is to reduce the CoC-wide average length of stay in TH by 16% per year. The actual length of stay for a particular household will vary based on their specific needs and the availability of affordable permanent housing resources.

**Core Components:** Transitional Housing programs must incorporate the following core components:

- Transitional Housing Case Management and Services:
  - Engage participants from day one to assess housing barriers, develop housing plans, and link households to the right types of assistance to facilitate movement back into permanent housing;
  - Help households address issues that may impede access to housing (such as credit history, arrears, and legal issues);
  - Make appropriate and time-limited services and supports available to families and individuals to allow them to move quickly to permanent housing.
  - Provide or assist the household with connections to resources that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals. This includes providing or ensuring that the household has access to resources related to benefits, employment, and community-based services (if needed and appropriate), so that they can sustain permanent housing upon exit.
  - Ensure that services provided are client-directed, respectful of individuals’ right to self-determination, and voluntary.
  - Help households identify and select among various permanent housing options based on their unique needs, preferences, and financial resources.

**Eligible Participants:** Households experiencing homelessness under the following Categories are eligible for services under Transitional Housing:

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness  
Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic

### **Required Transitional Housing Written Standards:**

- Households enrolled in Transitional Housing will be those prioritized through Coordinated Entry.

**CoC Established Program Standards:** In addition to compliance with the CoC Interim Rule, the Western PA CoC has established the following standards for Transitional Housing Programs:

- Case managers begin to work with participants around transitioning to permanent housing upon program entry.
- Case managers meet with participants at least bi-weekly to review their goal plans including utilization of community resources, employment, and housing options.

### **Supportive Services Only (SSO):**

CoC funded Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects, other than Coordinated Entry, provide services to persons experiencing homelessness that are not tied to specific housing units.

**Core Components:** SSO projects must incorporate the following core components:

- Supportive services must focus on assisting participants in obtaining housing and engage participants from day one to assess housing barriers, develop housing plans, and link households to the right types of assistance to facilitate movement back into permanent housing
- Services should include linking participants to mainstream benefits and resources

Note: CoC Funded Street Outreach Programs funded under SSO are addressed at the end of this document along with Street Outreach under ESG.

**Eligible Participants:** Households experiencing homelessness under the following Categories are eligible for services under SSO:

Category 1: Literally Homeless  
Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness  
Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic

**CoC Established Program Standards:** In addition to compliance with the CoC Interim Rule, the Western PA CoC has established the following standards for Supportive Services Only Programs:

- Case management services should be targeted to assisting households with attaining housing stability as quickly as possible

## **Homeless Prevention:**

ESG funds may be used to provide housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter, safe haven, or other place not meant for human habitation.

Per the Western PA CoC *Monitoring Plan*, the CoC has established the following performance goals for Homeless Prevention:

- Reduce the number of persons who become homeless for the first time by 10% per year:  
Baseline 10/1/2015-9/30/2016:  
2,452 persons were homeless for the first time out of a total of 2,730 assisted through ES, SH, TH, PH
- Reduce the number of persons who exit homelessness to permanent housing and who return to homelessness within 12 months by 10% and within 24 months by 16% per year:

**Core Components:** Homeless prevention should incorporate the following core components:

- Housing stability is the primary goal of homelessness prevention.
- Resources should be used for households who would otherwise be on the streets or in an emergency shelter
- Provide assistance necessary to help the program participant achieve stability in their current permanent housing or move to other housing
- Provide the minimum assistance necessary for the shortest time possible to achieve housing stability
- Maximize use of mainstream resources to help households address their needs and minimize duplication of services

**Eligible Participants:** Under ESG, an individual or family who is at imminent risk of losing their primary nighttime residence is eligible for assistance in accordance with the following Categories:

- Must have annual income BELOW 30% of Area Median Income (AMI)  
AND
- Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homeless; or
- Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes; or
- Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

## **Required Homeless Prevention Written Standards:**

- Programs must operate in compliance with the ESG Interim Rule, [https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConfomingAmendments.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_ESGInterimRuleandConPlanConfomingAmendments.pdf)

## **Amount of Rent Payment**



- Households pay a minimum of 30% of their adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities. However, at the discretion of each program, tenant’s share of the rent may change over time to support their attaining housing stability at the end of assistance.
- Income is reassessed quarterly and rental payments adjusted as appropriate.

## **Prioritization**

- The Western PA CoC has identified the following priorities for Homeless Prevention:
  - Families with Children
  - Veterans
  - Youth
  - Domestic Violence

## **Eligibility**

- The Documentation of Homelessness Checklist must be completed prior to enrollment of a household into a Prevention Program (see **Appendix B**) and uploaded into HMIS.

## **Length of Time Assistance Provided**

- Households are expected to exit the program as quickly as possible with a goal of 12 months or less. Recertifications/assessments should be conducted every 3 months. Extensions beyond 12 months need to be based on the HUD required Annual Assessments, which are also entered into HMIS. The maximum length of rental assistance is 24 months during any 3-year period.

**CoC Established Standards:** The following additional standards were established for the operation of Homeless Prevention within the Western PA CoC

- Case managers work with households to develop a Housing Stability Plan *that includes review of the affordability of the household’s housing unit and the possibility of moving to a more affordable living situation.* (**See Appendix C** for Housing Stability Plan Templates – Projects should choose from among these formats)
- The Housing Stability Plan should be reviewed monthly and revised every 3 months
- Discharge planning should start upon program entry with regular discussions about moving towards maintaining housing stability without a rental subsidy. (**See Appendix D** for Sample questions to use to encourage progress)

## **Emergency Shelter:**

An emergency shelter is any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for households experiencing homelessness and which do not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. *Non-ESG funded emergency shelters are encouraged to also follow these standards.*

Per the Western PA CoC *Strategic Plan*, Emergency Shelter programs should contribute to reducing the length of time households remain homeless. The CoC has established the goal that by 2021, households should move into permanent housing within an average of 29 days.

Per the 2016 System Performance Measures, the average length of stay in Emergency Shelter was 59 days. Per the Western Pa CoC *Monitoring Plan*, the goal is to reduce the average length of stay in ES by 13% per year for the CoC as a whole.

**Core Components:** Emergency Shelter must incorporate the following core components:

- Engage participants from day one to assess housing barriers, develop housing plans, and link households to the right types of assistance to facilitate movement back into permanent housing;
- To the maximum extent possible, all discharges should be to a permanent housing resource;

**Eligible Participants:**

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

### **Required Emergency Shelter Written Standards:**

ESG funded emergency shelters must operate in compliance with the ESG Rule and in accordance with the following Standards:

#### **Admission:**

- Maintain written policies for shelter admission.
- Emergency Shelters should not impose residency restrictions for entry.
- The Documentation of Homelessness Checklist and homeless documentation must be completed and uploaded to HMIS prior to enrollment of a household into ESG funded programs **(see Appendix B)**
- In accordance with the above Standards for all Programs, ESG funded Emergency Shelters must:
  - Operate in compliance with The Final Rule for Equal Access in HUD Programs.
    - Family shelters must serve all family compositions.
    - Persons must be accepted into shelters in accordance with the gender with which they identify and present themselves.
  - Make known that use of the facilities and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis.
  - Emergency Shelters that serve families with children are prohibited from denying assistance to or separating members of a family with children based on gender or age.

#### **Diversion:**

- Shelter intake staff should explore all options prior to enrolling a household in emergency shelter, including problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.
- Referral sources should be encouraged to explore alternatives to shelter prior to making a referral. This will require coordination among those operating other prevention programs, especially HAP.

**Discharge:** The goal for all emergency shelters is to exit households to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Upon admission to Emergency Shelter, all households should be entered into Coordinated Entry to expedite exit to permanent housing resources.

**Length of Stay:** The Western PA CoC has not established a maximum length of stay in Emergency Shelter. However, the goal is for households to remain in shelter for the shortest time possible in accordance with the CoC's Strategic Plan.

### **Safety and shelter needs of special populations**

- Victims of Domestic Violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking: To the extent possible, these households will be referred to the local domestic violence agency for safe shelter. When not feasible, shelter providers will work with their local domestic violence agency to develop protocols to meet their safety needs.

Households with highest barriers to housing and likely to be homeless the longest: Shelters will help these individuals to enroll in Coordinated Entry upon intake. Through the prioritization policies of CE, these households will be prioritized for permanent housing resources

**Assessment, Prioritization and reassessment of individuals' and families' needs for essential services:** Shelter staff should conduct an initial service assessment within 7 days of intake, prioritizing emergency service needs and referral to Coordinated Entry, then coordinating/providing services most crucial to housing attainment. Reassessments should be conducted weekly until discharge.

**CoC Established Standards:** The following additional standards were established for providing Emergency Shelter within the Western PA CoC

- To the extent possible, emergency shelters should have 24/7 hours of operation
- There must be access to staff, whether paid or volunteer during hours of program operation. This may be on site or through cell phone, if necessary.
- Shelters should provide access to food preparation and food storage space
- Shelters should make an effort to establish secure space for storage of personal possessions
- To the maximum extent possible, shelters should provide secure storage of medications, especially in shelters with children
- Smoking is prohibited in buildings that provide shelter to children
- Weapons may not be brought into emergency shelters.
- Emergency Shelters may deny entry or future stays only for the reasons listed below, in these situations, alternative shelter must be identified:
  - Violence towards other guests or staff
  - Excessive damage to property
  - Theft from the shelter or other guests
  - Need for medical services beyond those the shelter is equipped to provide

- For an individual in shelter who has a Protection From Abuse order, the abuser named in this order may be denied entry to the shelter.
- Sex offender registered on Megan’s Law list.
- Shelter guests may not bring or use illegal substances or alcohol on the premises

## **Street Outreach:**

Street Outreach includes provision of essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered people experiencing unsheltered homelessness; connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, nonfacility-based care to those who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.

**Core Components:** Street Outreach must incorporate the following core components:

- Engagement
- Address/provide basic survival items
- Provide assistance with accessing benefits and services
- Assist with obtaining housing

**Eligible Participants:** The following categories of Individuals or families are eligible for Street Outreach services:

- Category 1: Literally Homeless
- Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence (where the individual or family also meets the criteria for Category 1  
AND
- Individuals and families must be living on the streets (or other places not meant for human habitation) and be unwilling or unable to access services in emergency shelter

## **Required Street Outreach Written Standards:**

ESG funded Street Outreach must operate in compliance with the ESG Rule and CoC funded outreach must operate in compliance with the CoC Interim Rule.

- Engagement activities should include an initial assessment of needs and eligibility in order to prioritize the type and source of assistance required, prioritizing safety and urgent health needs.
- Outreach staff should conduct an assessment to identify and prioritize those Essential Services for which individuals/families identified through outreach are eligible, including: case management, emergency health services, and emergency mental health service, including Essential Services tailored to address the special needs of homeless youth, victims of domestic violence and related crimes/threats, and/or people living with HIV/AIDS who are living unsheltered.

**CoC Established Standards:** The following additional standards were established for providing Street Outreach within the Western PA CoC

- Outreach staff should establish trust with the individuals or families identified through outreach focusing on building positive relationships, including creating a safe presence and initiating non-threatening conversation.
- Households identified through outreach should be assisted with contacting Coordinated Entry as quickly as possible for prioritization for housing and assisted with accessing emergency shelter until a permanent housing resource is identified.
- ESG funded Street Outreach programs should conduct street outreach at a minimum of weekly, depending on budget and staffing.
- ESG funded outreach staff/teams must participate in and/or lead the unsheltered PIT count in their community.

## APPENDIX A

### Coordination with Other Programs

#### Per 24 CFR Part 576.400(b):

**(b)Coordination with other targeted homeless services.** The recipient and its subrecipients must coordinate and integrate, to the maximum extent practicable, ESG-funded activities with other programs targeted to homeless people in the area covered by the Continuum of Care or area over which the services are coordinated to provide a strategic, community-wide system to prevent and end homelessness for that area. These programs include:

- (1) Shelter Plus Care Program ([24 CFR part 582](#)); (now part of CoC Program)
- (2) Supportive Housing Program ( [24 CFR part 583](#)); (now part of CoC Program)
- (3) Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single Room Occupancy Program for Homeless Individuals ([24 CFR part 882](#));
- (4) HUD - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) (division K, title II, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, [Pub. L. 110-161](#) (2007), [73 FR 25026](#) (May 6, 2008));
- (5) Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grants for State and Local Activities (title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11431](#)*et seq.*));
- (6) Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (section 506 of the Public Health Services Act ([42 U.S.C. 290aa-5](#)));
- (7) Healthcare for the Homeless ( [42 CFR part 51c](#));
- (8) Programs for Runaway and Homeless Youth (Runaway and Homeless Youth Act ([42 U.S.C. 5701](#)*et seq.*));
- (9) Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) (part C of title V of the Public Health Service Act ([42 U.S.C. 290cc-21](#)*et seq.*));
- (10) Services in Supportive Housing Grants (section 520A of the Public Health Service Act);
- (11) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (title III of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11331](#)*et seq.*));
- (12) Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (section 40299 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act ([42 U.S.C. 13975](#)));
- (13) Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (section 5(a)(1)) of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act ([38 U.S.C. 2021](#));
- (14) Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program ([38 U.S.C. 2043](#));
- (15) VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program ( [38 CFR part 61](#));
- (16) Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program ([38 U.S.C. 2031](#));
- (17) Homeless Veterans Dental Program ([38 U.S.C. 2062](#));

(18) Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program ([38 CFR part 62](#)); and

(19) Veteran Justice Outreach Initiative ([38 U.S.C. 2031](#)).

**Per Western PA CoC (PA-601)**

- (1) PA Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)
- (2) PA Housing Affordability Fund (PHARE) – for projects targeted to serve households at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness
- (3) Home4Good

**Per 24 CFR Part 576.400(c):**

**(c)System and program coordination with mainstream resources.** The recipient and its subrecipients must coordinate and integrate, to the maximum extent practicable, ESG-funded activities with mainstream housing, health, social services, employment, education, and youth programs for which families and individuals at risk of homelessness and homeless individuals and families may be eligible. Examples of these programs include:

- (1) Public housing programs assisted under section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 ([42 U.S.C. 1437g](#)) ([24 CFR parts 905, 968, and 990](#));
- (2) Housing programs receiving tenant-based or project-based assistance under section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 ([42 U.S.C. 1437f](#)) (respectively [24 CFR parts 982 and 983](#));
- (3) Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811) ([24 CFR part 891](#));
- (4) HOME Investment Partnerships Program ([24 CFR part 92](#));
- (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) ( [45 CFR parts 260-265](#));
- (6) Health Center Program ([42 CFR part 51c](#));
- (7) State Children's Health Insurance Program ([42 CFR part 457](#));
- (8) Head Start (45 CFR chapter XIII, subchapter B);
- (9) Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants ([45 CFR part 96](#)); and
- (10) Services funded under the Workforce Investment Act ([29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.](#)).

## Emergency Solutions Grant Instructions for Documenting Homelessness

HUD Standards:

Range of Documentation Types in order of preference:

1. Third party documentation
2. Intake worker observations
3. Certification from the person seeking assistance

### **Category 1: Literally Homeless**

- ✓ Written referral by another housing or service provider; or
- ✓ Written observation by the outreach worker; or
- ✓ Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter;

*For individuals exiting an institution - one of the forms of evidence above to document prior homelessness AND:*

- ✓ Discharge paperwork or written/oral referral; or
- ✓ Written record of intake worker's due diligence to obtain above evidence AND certification by the individual that they exited the institution

### **Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness**

- ✓ Court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave with 14 days; OR
- ✓ For household leaving a hotel or motel, evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; OR
- ✓ Documented and verified oral statement; AND
- ✓ Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND
- ✓ Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lacks the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing

### **Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV**

*For Victim Service Providers:*

- ✓ Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources.
- ✓ The statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker

*For NON-Victim Service Providers:*

- ✓ Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the household is NOT jeopardized the oral statement must be verified; AND
- ✓ Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND
- ✓ Self-certification or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- ✓

### **At - Risk of Homelessness**

- ✓ Court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave between 14 – 21 days; OR
- ✓ For household leaving a hotel or motel, evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; OR
- ✓ Documented and verified oral statement; AND
- ✓ Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND
- ✓ Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lacks the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing

**\*\*\*Documentation of homelessness must be provided with each applicable selection and attached to checklist within each program participant's intake file. \*\*\***



**CATEGORY 1: LITERALLY HOMELESS**

- |                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Written referral by another housing or service provider   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Written observation by the outreach worker  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter; |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Discharge paperwork or written/oral referral</i>   | <i>For individuals exiting an institution</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Written record of intake worker's due diligence to obtain above evidence</i>   | <i>For individuals exiting an institution</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>certification by the individual that they exited the institution</i>   | <i>For individuals exiting an institution</i> |

**CATEGORY 2: IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave; OR   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | For household leaving a hotel or motel, evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; OR   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Documented and verified oral statement; AND   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lacks the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing |

**CATEGORY 4: FLEEING/ATTEMPTING TO FLEE DV**

*For Victim Service Providers:*

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker   |

*For NON-Victim Service Providers:*

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the household is NOT jeopardized the oral statement must be verified; AND |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-certification or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.   |

**AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave between 14 – 21 days; OR                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | For household leaving a hotel or motel, evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; OR   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Documented and verified oral statement; AND   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; AND   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-certification or other written documentation stating that the individual lacks the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing |

**PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION / SIGNATURES**

Agency Participant Name:		Agency Caseworker Signature:	
Agency Name:		Program Name:	
DCED Monitor's Name		DCED Monitor's Signature	

**I hereby declare that the information furnished above and attached is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

**\*\*\*Documentation of homelessness must be provided with each applicable selection and attached to checklist within each program participant's intake file. \*\*\***

## Creating a Housing Stabilization Plan

<b>WHO?</b>	Who is involved in developing the Housing Stabilization Plan?	A Housing Stabilization Plan is created with the case manager and the client. The client has the primary role in establishing their housing goals. If the client is involved with multiple services (i.e. mental health services, child welfare, etc) it may be a good idea to ask the client if their other case managers can be involved in the discussion to ensure that each provider is aligned with the client's goals. The role of the case manager is to support the follow through and achievement of the goals defined in the plan.
<b>WHAT?</b>	What is a Housing Stabilization Plan?	Housing Stabilization Plans document all the steps both the client and the case manager(s) will take to support the client in moving towards permanent housing. The plan addresses the steps needed to build on the client's resources and addresses their barriers. There are clear benchmarks and timelines so that when the plan is developed, everyone knows what happens next, when things need to be done and who is responsible for each action step. It is meant to be flexible and can adjust to account for changes in the client's circumstances.
<b>WHERE?</b>	Where are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	Housing Stabilization Plans are developed with the client when they are residing in any form of housing. The plan can follow the client as they transition to other programs and does not need to be recreated if the client enrolls in a different program. The focus of a Housing Stabilization Plan should change as the client's circumstances change – attaining housing versus keeping housing.
<b>WHEN?</b>	When are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	Immediately! It takes some time to complete the steps in an action plan. The sooner the work begins the better. And since the Housing Stabilization Plan defines the pathway to housing or to keep the current housing, the client should capitalize on each day to work towards the long term goal of attaining or keeping permanent housing.
<b>WHY?</b>	Why are Housing Stabilization Plans important?	Housing plans create a clear road map for both the client and the case manager. By establishing goals from the very beginning, clients are immediately engaged and motivated. Breaking down the goal of housing into concrete and attainable steps provides opportunities to celebrate success and helps clients feel their goals are manageable. Everyone (the client and case manager) knows who is working on what and why. It is not meant to be punitive. If a client is struggling in completing tasks the plan should be modified to adjust for the challenges they are facing.
<b>HOW?</b>	How are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	<p>Housing Stabilization Plans are developed with the client and after their assessment is completed. They reflect the client's voice and expressed goals. They include long term and short term goals. They have timelines and note who is responsible for completing each action item. Again, they can be updated or changed as needed.</p> <p>A strong Housing Stabilization Plan supports and works with the information learned in the assessment.</p>

## What should a housing assessment include?

### Housing History:

1. Tell me about the last place you lived that worked well for you. What about that experience/housing/situation made it work well for you?
2. Have you been on a lease before? How did that end? Can you get a positive landlord reference? Have you had any past evictions?
3. Have you ever lived in public housing or Section 8 before? How did that end? Do you owe any money to a housing authority?
4. Do you know if you have any housing-related debt (past due rent, utilities, etc?) If yes, about how much?

### Housing Goals:

1. Where would you like to live next? Is there a neighborhood you have in mind? Is there an area where you want to avoid (due to domestic violence or recover needs)?
2. Where do you have any friends or family? Where is your childcare set up? Your children's schools? Job options? Transportation?
3. What kind of apartment are you looking for? Do you need any special accommodations? What size unit?
4. What monthly rent are you trying to target? How much do you think you can afford each month?

### Housing Challenges

1. Have you tried applying for a new lease recently? What was the outcome? What did they tell you about your application?
2. Do you have any concerns about moving back into your own place? What are they?

### Other potential questions:

- What are some things relevant to your housing that you can't live without?
- What are some things relevant to your housing that you are willing to forego right now?
- How far are you willing/able to travel to/from home and work?
- Are there any areas of the city you want to avoid?
- How comfortable are you looking for an apartment? What kinds of questions will you ask? Do you want someone/me to come with you when you start looking?
- How can I help you with your goals?

### What a Housing Assessment Addresses

- ❖ Both strengths and challenges to get into housing
- ❖ Past housing experiences (both positive and negative)
  - Explores what works and doesn't work for the client
- ❖ Focuses on true housing barriers to understand what type of housing may be needed (families with high housing barriers should begin looking for private landlords with more flexible criteria). Housing barriers include:
  - Lack of income
  - Criminal backgrounds
  - Insufficient savings for move-in costs
  - Lack of a valid form of personal identification
  - Housing debt (to include debt to private landlords, housing authorities or utilities)

- ❖ The client's credit report (using free resources as often as possible)
  - This makes sure there are no unexpected housing-related debts or evictions
  - Clients can begin creating a re-payment plan with the necessary creditors (with advocacy from their case manager)
- ❖ Existing housing resources, to include:
  - Communities or neighborhoods where support systems exist (children's schools, childcare, mental health supports, etc.)
  - Communities or neighborhoods where potential employment opportunities that relate to the client's strengths exist
  - Identifying past landlords, employers or other person who can offer a positive reference

## **What a Housing Stabilization Plan addresses**

- ❖ Two to three housing goals (as described by the client)
  - Can include public housing (but should be targeted for clients with the greatest barriers to increasing income). Working with public housing authority and [sdhousingsearch.com](http://sdhousingsearch.com) for subsidized housing.
  - Should include market housing in areas that work for the client and are near existing resources and communities of support; resemble past housing situations that were successful for the client; and are based on real or realistically projected budgets. Creating a real or estimated budget with a client is a powerful tool to begin the discussion of what rent a client can afford and/or what income the client should target to afford their rent. This knowledge can help both in looking for housing and employment
- ❖ Long-term and short-term goals with clear timelines that move the client closer to the housing outcome they defined for themselves
  - A long-term goal towards renting an apartment may be "getting either a full-time job or two part-time jobs that will afford rent"
  - Short-term goals towards that long-term goal may be "creating a resume with my case manager, searching newspaper ads every day, working with Department of Labor, accessing resources for move-in costs", etc.
- ❖ Even before the client transitions into permanent housing, developing a Housing Stabilization Plan to address long-term housing stability
  - Creating a housing "safety plan" that reflects realistic challenges the client can face in the future and details of what resources the client can access if needed
  - Reviewing tenant rights and responsibilities in a way the client understands
  - Helping the client to identify and connect with any resources needed to address other goals that will support long term housing stability (mental health services, financial literacy courses, food banks, etc.).

## Housing Stabilization Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Barriers:** What barriers are keeping you from attaining or maintaining permanent housing?

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---

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**Goals:** What goals would you like to set to help alleviate the barriers listed above:

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Action Steps:** What steps need to be taken to help achieve the goals above:

**For Goal 1**

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

**For Goal 2**

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

**For Goal 3**

<b>What:</b>	<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>Who Needs to Complete:</b>	<b>Complete by:</b>

**For Goal 4**

<b>What:</b>	<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>Who Needs to Complete:</b>	<b>Complete by:</b>

The above barriers, goals and action steps were developed in partnership with my case manager. I understand that each barrier, goal and action step listed above will support my efforts in securing permanent housing. I agree to work on these goals in partnership with my case manager. I will update my case manager as I complete the above goals and will communicate any challenges I experience and understand my case manager can offer me support as needed. Failure to work toward achievement of these goals could result in termination from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Case Manager Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**COMMUNITY HOPE, INC.**  
**Housing Stability Plan**  
Supportive Services for Veterans Families

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Housing Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Veteran ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Re-Certification Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Housing Goal:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain permanent housing and address factors that threaten housing stability

\_\_\_\_\_ Prevent homelessness and address factors that threaten housing stability

**Safe, affordable housing options available to household:** (i.e. 1 BR apartment, studio apartment, etc.)

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**Factors that threaten housing stability:** (i.e. drug & alcohol abuse, underemployment, etc.)

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**Family needs related to housing:** (i.e. first floor due to physical limitations, specialized school/education, childcare, etc.)

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**Veteran/Family Strengths & Current Resources:**

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**Financial resources available to household:** (i.e. Service Connected Disability Compensation, T.R.A., etc.)

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**COMMUNITY HOPE, INC.**  
**Housing Stability Plan**  
 Supportive Services for Veterans Families

OBJECTIVE 1: Obtain/Maintain Permanent Housing				
WHAT	ACTION STEPS	WHO	INTENSITY (How often)	TARGET DATE
OBJECTIVE 2: Address Income/Benefit concerns that threaten housing stability				
WHAT	ACTION STEPS	WHO	INTENSITY (How often)	TARGET DATE
OBJECTIVE 3: Linkages Needed to create/maintain housing stability				
WHAT	ACTION STEPS	WHO	INTENSITY (How often)	TARGET DATE
OBJECTIVE 4:				
WHAT	ACTION STEPS	WHO	INTENSITY (How often)	TARGET DATE

***I agree with this Housing Stability Plan, have received a copy and will do what is required of me as stated above.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Veteran's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

***I assisted the Veteran in creating this housing stability plan.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Case Manager's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



# Housing Stability Plan      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Stability Plans must be updated and reviewed at least every 30 days and rewritten at least every 90 days

<b>Head of Household (HOH):</b> List other Household members:  What do you need today in order to achieve permanent housing stability?		<b>Housing Stability Navigator &amp; Contact:</b>
<b>Housing Need(s) &amp; 90 day Goal:</b> _____ Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____		<b>30/60 Day Updates:</b>
<b>Income Need(s) &amp; 90 day Goal:</b> _____ Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____		<b>30/60 Day Updates:</b>
<b>Health Need(s) &amp; 90 day Goal :</b> _____ Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____		<b>30/60 Day Updates:</b>

<p><b>Transportation Need(s) &amp; 90 day Goal:</b> _____</p> <p>Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____</p>	<p><b>30/60 Day Updates:</b></p>
<p><b>Education Need(s)&amp; 90 day Goal:</b> _____</p> <p>Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____</p>	<p><b>30/60 Day Updates:</b></p>
<p><b>Legal Issues Need(s) &amp; 90 day Goal:</b> _____</p> <p>Household Tasks: _____ Navigator Tasks/Mainstream Resource Connection: _____</p>	<p><b>30/60 Day Updates:</b></p>
<p><b>Exit Planning :</b> Securing &amp; Maintaining Permanent Housing</p> <p>Long-term Resources that will be helpful and/or necessary to maintain housing:</p> <p>If my housing becomes unstable I will contact:</p>	<p><b>30/60 Day Updates:</b></p>
<p><i>The above Housing Plan was developed in partnership with my Navigator. I understand that each action item listed above will support my efforts in securing permanent housing. I agree to work on this plan in partnership with my Navigator. I will update my Navigator as I complete the above goals. I will also communicate any challenges I experience and understand my Navigator can offer me support as needed.</i></p> <p>Signature of Client: _____ Signature of Navigator: _____</p> <p>Date: _____ Date: _____</p>	

**At 3, 6 and 9 month reviews, Navigators must provide a copy of this form and any required supporting documentation to MaineHousing Program Officer if any of the following statements apply:**

- Household has had an income change (Circle One): Yes No
- Household has had a family composition change (circle one): Yes No
- If the Household is exiting from services or has any changes this has been updated in HMIS.



**2. Transition into permanent housing after completing Northwest Rapid Re-Housing Program:**

*Include housing move in date or transition to other funding streams and any additional help needed for utilities.*

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*Goals and Objectives:*

Activity	Objective	Date goal established	Who is responsible	Date completed

**3. Obtain Income:** *Describe any financial issues positive or negative:* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Goals and Objectives:*

Activity	Objective	Date goal established	Who is responsible	Date completed

**4. Treatment services (case management, MH, D&A, education, etc.)**

*Describe treatment needs.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Goals and Objectives:*

Activity	Objective	Date goal established	Who is responsible	Date completed

**5. Obtain benefits programs:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Goals and Objectives:*

Activity	Objective	Date Goal established	Who is responsible	Date completed

**6. Maintain housing:**

*Describe any other support service needs and referrals needed, including connections to natural supports:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Goals and Objectives:*

Activity	Objective	Date Goal established	Who is responsible	Date completed

**Comments:**

**Participants in the development of this service plan:**

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Signature

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Date

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Date

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Date

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Signature

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Date

COMPLETION OF SERVICE PLAN at **Exit** from RRH/ESG Program

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Signature

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Date

## Appendix D- Sample Questions

### Monthly Home Visit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time: \_\_\_\_\_

- How is everything going?
- How is employment / job searching Going?
- Are you paying your rent timely?
- Are your utility bills current?
- What is your plan for self-sufficiency? (only have 6-9 months to become self-sufficient)
- What progress have you made to meet the self-sufficiency goal?
- Have you received any notices from your landlord?
- What services are you currently active with (MH/Career Link /etc.)?
- Have you engaged in any new services since last visit?

- **Would you like referrals for any services?  
If yes, which one(s)?**
- **Any change in income?**
- **If change in income, have you notified and provided the info to County Assistance Office and us?**
- **Any change with employment?**
- **Any change in household composition?**
- **OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Tenant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Housing Case Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**