

# Western PA CoC Written Standards Training 2021 – Emergency Shelter

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# What are the Written Standards?

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- Required by HUD
- Provide guidance for CoC and ESG programs related to service delivery
- Ensure that all programs are operating in a consistent, coordinated way that is compliant with HUD and CoC standards



# Structure of Written Standards

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- Standards for all project types
  - Includes recordkeeping and case management standards
  - *If you did not attend the training on Standards for all Project Types or watched the recording yet, please check it out!*
- Standards by project type – specific standards that must be followed if you are operating PSH, RRH, etc.
- Appendices
- Templates – separate document. Not required, but available as a resource



# Standards for Emergency Shelter (ES)



# Goals

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- Exit households to permanent housing as quickly as possible
- Upon admission, all households should be entered into CE to expedite permanent housing
- **CoC recommends that all ES programs, regardless of funding source, follow the CoC Written Standards**



# Access

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- May accept participant referrals from CE, other agencies, or from the participants themselves
- **Diversion:** Shelter staff should explore all options prior to enrolling a household in ES
- **DV:** To the extent possible, households fleeing DV will be referred to the local domestic violence agency for safe shelter



# Eligibility

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



# Eligibility

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ES *may* deny entry or future stays only for the reasons listed below.

- 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\*
- Any known abuser of a current resident (even if no PFA)
- Sex offender registered on Megan's Law list, depending on location and other client served





# Prioritization

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Each shelter will be responsible for establishing their own prioritization standards



# Prioritization: Emergency Transfers due to DV

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If emergency transfer is needed due to DV:

- Provider should offer alternate unit within their organization's own inventory whenever possible
- If alternate unit not available, the provider should follow the process outlined in the Emergency Transfer Plan. Emergency transfer requests may be expedited/prioritized in order to identify a housing resource for which the household is eligible as soon as possible



# Documentation (ES Specific)

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- Documentation of Homelessness/At Risk of Homelessness\*
- ES programs should work with participants to obtain their necessary documentation
- See Documentation for All Project Types for additional requirements

*\*there's a template for that!*



# Duration and Amounts

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- No maximum length of stay in ES
- Shelters should avoid discharging guests except when the guest poses a danger to themselves or other shelter residents
- Goal is for households to remain in shelter for the shortest time possible to obtain PH
- Shelters should provide flexibility related to length of stay based on individual needs
- ES programs should not charge fees



# ES-Specific Standards

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- Engage participants from day one to assess housing barriers, develop housing plans, and link households to the right types of assistance
- Discharge, to the greatest extent possible, to a permanent housing resource



# ES-Specific Standards

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- Operating in compliance with The Final Rule for Equal Access in HUD Projects
  - 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
- ES that serve families with children are prohibited from denying assistance to or separating members of a family with children based on gender or age
- Fair Housing and ADA compliance re: service/support animals



# ES-Specific Standards

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- Non-discrimination policy
- To the extent possible, ES should have 24/7 hours of operation
- Low-barrier approach
- There must be access to staff during hours of project operation
- Provide access to food preparation and food storage space
- Establish secure space for storage of personal possessions



# ES-Specific Standards

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- 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 ES
- Shelter guests may not bring or use illegal substances or alcohol on the premises





# ES-Specific Case Management

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- Shelter staff should conduct an initial service assessment within 7 days of intake, prioritizing emergency service needs and referral to CE/housing resources
- Weekly re-assessments



# Performance Measures

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- **Households move into PH:** Average 29 days
- **Clients exit to permanent housing:** At least 47% of households
- Clients do not return to homelessness within 2 years



# Next Steps

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- All CoC and ESG funded programs sign off by July 1<sup>st</sup> that their program(s) understand the standards, and will implement them: <http://s.alchemer.com/s3/WS-Form>
  - If there are standards that programs are not implementing, make a plan to implement those standards by Sept. 1, 2021.
- Feedback on the standards is welcome year-round: <http://s.alchemer.com/s3/West-Written-Standards-Feedback>



# Questions?

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- Email [westerncoc@pennsylvaniacoc.org](mailto:westerncoc@pennsylvaniacoc.org)

