

# Western PA CoC Written Standards Training 2021 – Homelessness Prevention

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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  
Homelessness  
Prevention (HP)  
Programs

# Goals

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- Housing stability is the primary goal
- ESG HP is intended to prevent households from losing all housing and ending up in ES or on the street

# Access

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- Households will be screened for prevention resources through CE
- If a household is identified at risk of homelessness (per HMIS assessment), CE assessor will refer to prevention providers in their county
- These households will NOT be added to the Prioritization List/BNL

# Access

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- Upon receipt of referral, prevention providers will screen participants for eligibility
- Participants fleeing DV/attempting to flee DV may be eligible for EITHER HP or RRH resources
- DV Assessment Center may make referrals based on participant choice and resource availability

# Eligibility

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- Imminent Risk of Homelessness (Cat. 2) or Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (Cat. 4)

**AND**

- Households must be very-low income (gross annual income less than 30% off AMI)



# Prioritization

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- Prioritization screening is essential when an ESG project does not have sufficient resources to serve every eligible household
- In general, resources should be prioritized for households who would otherwise be on the streets or in an ES
- HP Providers should use the Western PA CoC HP Screening Toolkit to prioritize households

# Prioritization

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- Category 2 - At risk of homelessness, with a court order resulting from an eviction action that requires the individual or family to leave their residence within 14 days
- Category 2, 3, or 4 Homeless
  - For Category 4 (fleeing DV), this can include households who are experiencing domestic violence but are still housed.

# 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 (HP Specific)

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- Documentation of Homelessness/At Risk of Homelessness\*
- Landlord-Agency Agreement\*
- Lease\*
- Passed Inspections
- Housing Stability Plan\*

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

# Documentation (HP Specific)

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- **If rental arrearages are being paid:** proof of funds owed and that the landlord will cease eviction proceedings if paid
- **If utility arrearages are being paid:** proof of pending shut-off, that the household is responsible for utilities per the lease, and that the bill is in the tenant's name at the address on the lease
- See Documentation for all Project Types for additional requirements

# Duration and Amounts

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- Amount of rental assistance is highly individualized
- Level of subsidy should lessen over time, as household is able to pay more and works toward stabilizing
- Most households should be stabilized within an average 6-month timeframe

# Duration and Amounts

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- Rental or utility arrearages of up to 6 months may be paid if doing so will stop an eviction and prevent homelessness
- First month's rent after enrollment can be offered in full to assist the household
- Unit rent may not exceed either FMR or Rent Reasonableness
- Additional costs may be covered

# HP-Specific Standards

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- Income is reassessed quarterly for the purposes of eligibility and adjusting rental payments
- If the household identifies as stabilized, they may be successfully discharged at any time



# HP-Specific Case Management

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- Exit planning should start upon project entry
- Work with households to develop a Housing Stability Plan

# Performance Measures

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- No specific CoC-wide performance measures
- In general programs should work toward:
  - Stability in permanent housing as quickly as feasible
  - Preventing future returns to homelessness
  - Increasing income and access to mainstream benefits
- Refer to your grant guidelines for more info on performance measures

# 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)

