# Western PA CoC Written Standards Training 2025

PRESENTED BY DIANA T. MYERS AND ASSOCIATES, CONSULTANT FOR THE COC

**MARCH 13, 2025**

# What are the Written Standards?

- 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

- Required by HUD

# Structure of Written Standards

- Standards for all project types

  - Includes recordkeeping and case management standards

- Standards by project type – specific standards that must be followed if you are operating PSH, RRH, etc.

- Appendices

- Optional Forms and Templates – separate document. Not required, but available as a resource

# Standards for Homelessness Prevention (HP) Programs

# Goals

- Housing stability is the primary goal.

- HP is NOT eviction prevention.

- ESG Homelessness Prevention is intended to prevent households from losing all housing and ending up in an emergency shelter or other place not meant for human habitation.

# Access

- Households will be screened for prevention resources through CE.

- If a household is identified at risk of homelessness (per HMIS assessment), the CE assessor will refer to prevention providers in their county (ESG, SSVF, PHFA Home4Good, etc.)

- These households will NOT be added to the Prioritization List/BNL.

# Access

- Upon receipt of referral, prevention providers will screen participants for eligibility.
- If a prevention provider receives ESG funds, they will use the ESG HP Screening Workflow in HMIS to prioritize households for HP assistance.
- Participants fleeing DV/attempting to flee DV (Category 4) may be eligible for EITHER ESG HP or CoC RRH resources.

- DV Assessment Center may make referrals based on participant choice and resource availability.

# Eligibility

- Imminent Risk of Homelessness (Cat. 2); OR

- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (Cat. 4); OR

- At-risk of homelessness as defined at 24 CFR 576.2;

    **AND**

- Households must be very-low income (gross annual income less than 30% off AMI based on HUD-published income limits).

# Prioritization

- In general, resources should be prioritized for households who would otherwise be on the streets or in an ES.

- HP Providers should use the ESG HP Screening workflow in HMIS to prioritize households.

- Prioritization screening is essential when an ESG project does not have sufficient resources to serve every eligible household.

# Prioritization

- Category 2 - At imminent risk of homelessness, with a court order resulting from an eviction action that requires the household to leave their residence within 14 days after their date of application for homeless assistance

- Category 2, 3, or 4 Homeless

- At risk of homelessness

# Documentation (HP Specific)

- Documentation of Homelessness/At Risk of Homelessness*

- Landlord-Agency Agreement*

- Lease*

- Passed Inspections

- Housing Stability Plan*

- *See Documentation for All Project Types for additional requirements*

*there's a template for that!*

# Documentation (HP Specific)

- **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 participant's name at the address on the lease

- *See Documentation for all Project Types for additional requirements*

# Duration and Amounts

- HP providers are required to provide the Access and Diversion phase of CE, using a progressive engagement approach that incorporates Housing Problem Solving (HPS) Prevention techniques to serve households with case management, supportive services, and financial assistance, including one-time payments and short-term housing assistance, to identify the lightest-touch method to successfully eliminate each participant's barriers to remaining in safe, stable permanent housing.

- If diversion techniques are unsuccessful, HP projects are required to connect households to emergency services, including emergency shelter.

# Duration and Amounts

- Amount of rental assistance is highly individualized.

- Participants will not be approved for more assistance than can be justified based on their income and expenses at any given time.

- Generally, over time, (barring unforeseen circumstances) the project will pay less toward rent while the participant pays more, until such time as the participant, generally, is paying in full and exits the project.

# Duration and Amounts

- 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 the lesser of either FMR or Rent Reasonableness.

- Additional costs may be covered; projects should refer to the grant application guidelines applicable to the contract year.

# Duration and Amounts

- Most households should be stabilized within an average 6-month timeframe.

- Should a household need assistance beyond 12 months, WS includes list of reasonable extension justifications.

- In no instances will a household receive more than 24 months of rental assistance (HP or RRH) in any 3-year period, and no fees can be imposed on project participants beyond payment of rent.

# HP-Specific Standards

- 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

- In addition to the requirements in the Case Management Standards for All Project Types section,

  - Exit planning should start upon project entry.

  - 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

# Performance Measures

- 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 what you stated in your ESG grant applications for info on performance measures

# Next Steps

- All CoC- and ESG- funded programs sign off by April 30, 2025 that their program(s) have reviewed the WS, understand them, will implement them, haved watched the recorded trainings, and will ensure that all new hires review the standards and recorded CoC trainings within 60 days of hire: https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8216721/Western-PA-CoC-Written-Standards-Acknowledgment-Form-2025

- If there are standards that programs are not implementing, make a plan to implement those standards by June 30, 2025.

- Feedback on the standards is welcome year-round: https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7127925/Western-PA-CoC-Written-Standards-Annual-Feedback