

Balance of State Continuum of Care Program Standards for Permanent Supportive Housing Programs

The Balance of State Continuum of Care developed the following Permanent Supportive Housing Program standards to insure:

- Program accountability to individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Program compliance with HUD rules
- Program uniformity
- Adequate program staff competence and training, specific to the target population being served

DEFINITIONS:

Chronically Homeless – (1) An individual who: (i) is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and (ii) has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years; and (iii) can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 USC 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability; (2) an individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, or other similar facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or (3) A family with an adult head of household who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of the household has been homeless. 24 CFR 578.3.

Developmental Disability – means, as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002): (1) A severe, chronic disability of an individual that— (i) Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; (ii) Is manifested before the individual attains age 22; (iii) Is likely to continue indefinitely; (iv) Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: (A) Self-care; (B) Receptive and expressive language; (C) Learning; (D) Mobility; (E) Self-direction; (F) Capacity for independent living; (G) Economic self-sufficiency. (v) Reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated. (2) An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting three or more of the criteria described in paragraphs (1)(i) through (v) of the definition of “developmental disability” in this section if the individual, without

services and supports, has a high probability of meeting these criteria later in life. 24 CFR 578.3.

Disabling Condition – (1) a condition that: (i) is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration; (ii) substantially impedes the individual’s ability to live independently; (iii) could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions; and (iv) is a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury; or (2) a development disability, as defined above; or (3) the disease of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, including infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). 24 CFR 583.5.

Family - includes, but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status: (1) A single person, who may be an elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or (2) A group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to: (i) A family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family); (ii) An elderly family; (iii) A near-elderly family; (iv) A disabled family; (v) A displaced family; and (vi) The remaining member of a tenant family. 24 CFR 5.403.

Homeless – means (1) an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (i) an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; (ii) an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution; (2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: (i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing; (3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who: (i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a); (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance; (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more

during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or (4) Any individual or family who: (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; (ii) Has no other residence; and (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing. 24 CFR 578.3.

Permanent Supportive Housing – means community-based housing without a designated length of stay, and includes both permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing. To be permanent housing, the program participant must be the tenant on a lease for a term of at least one year, which is renewable for terms that are a minimum of one month long, and is terminable only for cause. Permanent supportive housing means permanent housing in which supportive services are provided to assist homeless persons with a disability to live independently. 24 CFR 578.3.

PERSONNEL

STANDARD: The program shall be adequately staffed by qualified personnel to ensure quality service delivery, effective program management, and the safety of program participants.

CRITERIA:

1. The agency selects, for its service staff, only those employees and/or volunteers with appropriate knowledge, or experience, for working with individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or other issues that put individuals or families at risk of housing instability.
2. The program provides training to all paid and volunteer staff on both the policies and procedures employed by the program and on specific skill areas as determined by the program.
3. All paid and volunteer service staff participate in ongoing and/or external training, and development to further enhance their knowledge and ability to work with individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or other issues that put individuals or families at risk of housing instability.
4. For programs that use HMIS, all HMIS users must abide by the standard operating procedures found in the HMIS Policies and Procedures manual. Additionally, users must adhere to the privacy and confidentiality terms set forth in the User Agreement.
5. Agency staff with responsibilities for supervision of the casework, counseling, and/or case management components have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree in a human service-related

field and/or experience working with individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or other issues that put individuals or families at risk of housing instability.

6. Staff with supervisory responsibilities for overall program operations shall have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree in a human service-related field and/or demonstrated ability and experience that qualifies them to assume such responsibility.
7. All staff have a written job description that at a minimum addresses the major tasks to be performed and the qualifications required for the position.
8. The program operates under an affirmative action/civil rights compliance plans or letters of assurance.
9. Case supervisors review current cases and individual service plans on a regular and consistent basis to ensure quality/coordinated services.

CLIENT INTAKE PROCESS

STANDARD: The program will be an active member in its regional Coordinated Assessment system. The program will have minimal entry requirements to ensure the most vulnerable of the population are being served. The program will ensure active client participation and informed consent.

CRITERIA:

1. All adult program participants must meet the following program eligibility requirements:
 - a. 18 years old or older
 - b. Literally Homeless (See definitions listed above for Category 1 of the Homeless Definition)
 - c. Adult household members are able to participate in developing and carrying out an appropriate participation plan and maintain accountability of said plan
2. Programs may require participants to meet only these additional program eligibility requirements:
 - a. Chronically homeless
 - b. Residency requirements
 - c. A period of sobriety
 - d. Other program-specific requirements (i.e. limiting program entry to a specific subpopulation of individuals or families experiencing homelessness)
3. The only reasons programs may have the option to disqualify an individual or family from program entry are:
 - a. Household make-up, provided it does not violate HUD's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements (Singles-Only programs can disqualify households with children, Families-Only programs can disqualify single households, etc.)
 - b. If the housing has in residence at least one family with a child under the age of 18, the housing may exclude registered sex offenders and persons with a criminal record that includes a violent crime from the project so long as the child resides in the housing. (CFR 578.93).
4. Additionally, programs may not disqualify an individual or family from program entry for lack of income or employment status.

5. Programs cannot disqualify an individual or family because of evictions or poor rental history.
6. The program explains the services that are available and the requirements for participation and secures a commitment from each adult household member to participate in program services prior to admitting the individual or family into the program.
7. The program will maintain a Release of Information that allows the sharing of information with relevant people and/or agencies. Program participants have copies of all Releases of Information that they have signed, and have the right to revoke any Release of Information without penalty.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

STANDARD: The program will provide safe, affordable housing that meets participants' needs in accordance with client intake practices and within HUD guidelines for permanent supportive housing programs.

CRITERIA:

1. In providing or arranging for housing, the program considers the needs of the individual or family experiencing homelessness.
2. The program provides assistance in accessing suitable housing.
3. The program may provide assistance with moving costs.
4. The program signs occupancy agreements or leases (or subleases) with all program participants residing in housing.
5. The program enters into a lease agreement with program participant for a term of at least one year, which is terminable for cause. The lease must be automatically renewable upon expiration for a minimum term of one month. Assistance may be extended as stated in 24 CFR 578.79.
6. In accordance with CFR 578.77 agencies are not required to impose occupancy charges on program participants as a condition of residing in the housing. However, if occupancy charges are imposed, they may not exceed the highest of :
 - a. 30% of the household's monthly adjusted gross income;
 - b. 10% of the household's monthly income; or
 - c. If the household is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of the payments is specifically designated by the agency to meet the household's housing costs, the portion of the payments that is designated for housing costs.

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

STANDARD: The program shall provide access to case management services by trained staff to each individual or family participating in the program.

CRITERIA (Required):

1. Individual case management is provided to program participants on a regular and consistent basis as determined by the individual's case plan. Case management includes the following:

- a. Assessing, planning, coordinating, implementing and evaluating the overall service delivered to the participant.
 - b. Helping participants learn to live in housing, maintain their housing in a safe manner, get along with fellow tenants and the landlord.
 - c. Helping participants create support systems and participate in the community as they desire.
2. Individualized budgeting and money management services are provided to program participants as needed.

CRITERIA (other eligible services):

3. Representative payee services may be provided.
4. Basic life skills information, including housekeeping, menu planning and food preparation, consumer education, leisure-time activities, transportation, and obtaining vital documents (Social Security card, birth certificate, etc.) may be provided.
5. Interpersonal skill building, such as developing positive relationships with others, parenting skills, effective communication, decision making, conflict resolution, and stress management may be provided.
6. Educational advancement, such as GED preparation and attainment, post-secondary training, and vocational education may be provided.
7. Job preparation and attainment, such as career counseling, job preparation training, dress and grooming, job placement and job maintenance may be provided.
8. Assistance in accessing mainstream benefits, including food stamps, child care assistance, and health insurance, may be provided.
9. Mental Health services, such as relapse prevention, crisis intervention, outpatient therapy, psychiatric services, medication monitoring and/or dispensing, may be provided.
10. AODA services, such as outpatient treatment, relapse prevention and crisis intervention, may be provided.
11. Physical health care, such as routine physicals, health assessments, and family planning education may be provided.
12. Legal Services related to civil (rent arrears, family law, uncollected benefits) or criminal (warrants, minor infractions, etc.) matters may be provided.
13. Assistance with food, clothing and/or transportation may be provided.
14. The program may require program participants to take part in supportive services provided through the program as a condition of continued participation, as long as the services are not disability-related (e.g., mental health, outpatient health services, substance abuse).
 - a. The program can only require disability-related services if the participant's housing stability is in jeopardy.

SERVICE COORDINATION

STANDARD: The program shall coordinate with community agencies and individuals for the provision of those services needed and requested by the individual or family, but that are not directly provided by the program.

CRITERIA:

1. Arrangements shall be made as appropriate with community agencies and individuals for the provision of medical services, mental health services, legal services, and other assistance requested by the participant, which are not provided directly by the program.

TERMINATION

STANDARD: Termination is expected to be limited to only the most severe cases. Programs will exercise judgment and examine all extenuating circumstances when determining if violations are serious enough to warrant termination.

CRITERIA:

1. The program may terminate services when the following occurs :
 - a. A participant engages in violent or aggressive behavior toward others, including program staff.
 - b. A participant uses illegal drugs in their unit.
 - c. A participant engages in criminal activity in their unit.
 - d. A participant is evicted by the landlord.
2. In termination assistance to a program participant, the agency must follow the due process provisions outlined in 24 CFR 578.91. This includes a formal process that recognizes the rights of individuals receiving assistance under the due process of law. This process, at minimum, must consist of: (i) providing the program participant with a written copy of the program rules and the termination process before the participant begins to receive assistance; (ii) written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reason for termination; (iii) 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 (iv) prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.
3. Termination under this section does not bar the recipient or sub-recipient from providing further assistance at a later date to the same individual or family.

FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

STANDARD: The program shall provide a continuity of services to all participants following their exit from the program. These services can be provided directly and/or through referrals to other agencies or individuals.

CRITERIA:

1. The program develops exit plans with the participant to ensure continued housing stability and connection with community resources, as desired.

2. The program should attempt to follow up with phone or written contact at least once after the client exits the program. A program may provide follow-up services that include identification of additional needs and referral to other agency or community resources.
3. Services may be provided to formerly homeless individuals or families for up to six months after their exit from homelessness.

CLIENT FILES

STANDARD: The documentation necessary for the effective delivery and tracking of service will be kept up to date and the confidentiality of program participants will be maintained.

CRITERIA:

1. The file maintained on each participant should, at a minimum, include information required by HUD, participation agreements, service plans, case notes, information on the services provided both directly and through referrals to community agencies and individuals, and any follow-up and evaluation data that are compiled.
2. Client information must be entered into HMIS in accordance with the data quality, timeliness and additional requirements found in the HMIS Policies and Procedures manual. At a minimum, programs must record the date the client enters and exits the program, and update the client's information as changes occur.
3. The program will maintain each participant file in a secure place and shall not disclose information from the file without the written permission of the participant as appropriate except to project staff and other agencies as required by law. Participants must give informed consent to release any client identifying data to be utilized for research, teaching and public interpretation.
4. All records pertaining to Continuum of Care funds must be retained for the greater of 5 years or the participant records must be retained for 5 years after the expenditure of all funds from the grant under which the program participant was served. Copies made by microfilming, photocopying, or similar methods may be substituted for the original records. Where Continuum of Care funds are used for the acquisition, new construction, or rehabilitation of a project site, records must be retained until 15 years after the date that the project site is first occupied, or used, by program participants. Records pertaining to other funding sources must adhere to those record retention requirements.

EVALUATION AND PLANNING

STANDARD: Ongoing program planning and evaluation will be conducted.

CRITERIA:

1. The program has written goals and objectives for its services to meet the outcomes required by HUD.
2. The program reviews the case management, housing, and follow-up needs of program participants and the existing services that are available to meet these needs. As appropriate, revisions to goal, objectives and activities are made based on program evaluation.

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3. The program exhibits due regard for participant privacy in conducting and reporting its evaluation.