



Appendix 14 - SUPPORTIVE HOUSING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM STANDARDS GUIDELINES

As Administered by the State of Connecticut
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Department of Social Services
Department of Children and Families

January 30, 2009

1. Housing and Services-Property Management Relationship

- a. Tenants possess a lease that meets all fair housing laws for their apartment.
- b. There is a demonstrated collaboration between the social services and property management entities that fosters effective communication—and this is preferably specified in a memorandum of understanding, but at a minimum through regular documented meetings between the service agency and the property management entity.

2. Intake and Assessment of Tenants

- a. Service provider conducts intakes and comprehensive assessments of all tenants receiving services, and this must be documented in charts to be maintained by the service agency.
- b. Chart records should include elements from the following: personal identifying information; eligibility information (e.g. homelessness and/or disability); housing history; employment (status and prior work history); other household members, if applicable, and service needs; issues related to medical, financial or legal concerns; psychosocial history and identified issues.
- c. Charts to also document regular re-assessment of tenants receiving services.

3. Service Plans and Service Delivery

- a. Service agency adheres to a policy regarding development of service plans between the tenant and case manager which includes the following elements: evidence of a policy which states that participation in services is not required in order to retain housing; service plans are individualized and recognize both short and long-term needs of residents and immediate household members; service plans describe existing and planned linkages with vocational, educational and healthcare providers; service plan should include, as needed, strategies for relapse prevention and management, and linkages to appropriate treatment.
- b. Case management services should meet the following criteria: reflect individualized service plans; case manager does not perform functions of landlord or property management (e.g. collect rents or evict tenants); case manager maintains an effective working relationship with the property manager; services help link tenants with mainstream and other community resources.

4. Agency and Program Policies

- a. Admission and discharge policies criteria include the following: clear eligibility and selection criteria; selection is based on first-come and first-served; policies are applied consistently; there exists a written policy regarding discharge, and a grievance procedure available for applicants and tenants.
- b. Agreement to maintain a separate waiting list for persons with disabilities and prioritizing these individuals for any units that may become vacant after the initial rent-up period, up to the required number of units.

5. Review Process

- a. All supportive housing components of LIHTC proposals may be reviewed by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services with the intent to conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation. The Department will review proposals to determine fidelity to the supportive housing model, that housing provided will be for individuals who are homeless or at

risk of homelessness and have a mental health or substance abuse disorder. The Department will also review the service plan and any MOU's (if applicable) to ensure the needs of the tenants are met.

- b. If selected for funding through the LIHTC Program, the service provider must agree to participate in an ongoing program of Quality Assurance Monitoring and Program Review of both the housing and services components of the project. This review will examine service program operations and client outcomes.

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Shelter Plus Care/Supportive Housing Program

HOMELESS VERIFICATION FORM

Applicant Name:	
Date Form Completed:	
Referral Agency:	
Contact Name:	Contact Phone Number:

SHELTER PLUS CARE ELIGIBILITY

- On the Street
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional housing or supportive housing for the homeless originally coming from the streets or emergency shelter.
- Sub-standard housing not fit for human habitation, in car, abandoned building, building w/o utilities, etc.
- Institution: psychiatric hospitalization, substance abuse treatment or jail, with discharge to emergency shelter or transitional housing program.
- Eviction within one week from private dwelling and other housing has not been identified.
- Fleeing a domestic violence situation and lacks the resources to obtain housing.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

- Yes
 - 4 or more episodes over the last 3 years
 - 1 year or more homeless this episode
- No

VERIFICATION LETTERS

Attached verification letter of homeless status on agency letterhead signed by agency representative.

- Yes
- No

Attached verification letter of eviction status signed by agency representative, landlord or family member living in dwelling.

- Yes
- No

HOMELESS VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Living on the street; living somewhere not considered human habitation

- ❑ Sign and dated statements validating situation on letterhead from outreach workers and organizations that assisted the person in the recent past **OR**
 - ❑ Applicant should prepare a written narrative of the situation of how they came to be and are residing on the street **OR**
 - ❑ Written verification signed and dated on letterhead from referring social service organization or outreach worker providing information regarding where the person has been residing.
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In an emergency shelter

- ❑ Verification signed and dated on the emergency shelter letterhead documenting where the person has been residing.
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Persons coming from transitional housing for homeless persons

- ❑ Written verification signed, dated and on letterhead from the transitional facility that the participant has been residing in transitional housing **AND**
 - ❑ Written documentation from shelter/caseworkers of person living on the streets, being discharged from an institution, or would have been homeless if not for the transitional housing.
-

Person from a short term stay (up to 30 consecutive days) in an institution

- ❑ Written signed and dated verification on letterhead from the institution staff that the participant has been residing in the institution for 30 consecutive days or less **AND**
 - ❑ Written verification on letterhead from shelter or agency that the participant was residing on the street or in an emergency shelter prior to the short term stay in the institution.
-

Persons being evicted from a private dwelling

- ❑ Evidence of formal eviction proceedings indicating that the participant was being evicted **within the week before** receiving the SHP assistance.
 - ❑ If living with friend/family member and NOT on the lease, written verification that this situation places the other residents in jeopardy of eviction, loss of housing, loss of subsidy (i.e.: Section 8, RAP, Shelter Plus Care).
 - ❑ If there is no formal eviction and the person is forced out of the housing by circumstances beyond the applicants control the applicant must provide a signed and dated narrative explaining the situation **AND**
 - ❑ Independent verification by the Property Manager or Property Staff signed and dated confirming validation of the above circumstances attesting to their validity.
 - ❑ Information on the income of the participant and the narrative of the efforts that were made to obtain housing and why without SHP the applicant would be in a shelter or living on the street.
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Persons being discharged from an institution

- ❑ Written, signed and dated verification on letterhead from the institution's staff that the participant was being **Discharged within the week** before receiving SHP assistance **AND**
 - ❑ Income information on the participant and what efforts were made to obtain housing why without SHP assistance, the participant would be living on the streets or in an emergency shelter.
-

Fleeing domestic violence

- ❑ Written, signed and dated verification from the participant that he/she is fleeing a domestic violence situation **OR**
- ❑ If the participant is unable to do so, a written narrative prepared on behalf of the participant regarding the previous living situation, participant should sign and date the statement attesting validity.



Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Supportive Housing Service Providers
2010

Alpha Community Services, Inc. (Bridgeport)
ACCESS Agency, Inc. (Killingly and Putnam)
Beth-El Center, Inc. (Milford)
Birmingham Group Health Services, Inc. (Ansonia, Derby, Shelton)
Chemical Abuse Services Agency, Inc. (CASA) (Bridgeport)
Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, Inc. (Bridgeport)
Catholic Charities of Hartford, Inc. (Hartford)
Center for Human Development, Inc. (Danbury, Torrington and Waterbury)
Chrysalis Center, Inc. (Hartford and suburbs)
Columbus House, Inc. (New Haven and suburbs)
Community Health Resources, Inc. (Enfield and Manchester)
Community Mental Health Affiliates, Inc. (New Britain)
Community Renewal Team, Inc. (Hartford)
Connection, Inc. (Groton, Middlesex County, New Haven and Torrington)
Continuum of Care, Inc. (New Haven)
Family and Children's Agency, Inc. (Norwalk)
Fellowship, Inc. (New Haven)
Friendship Center, Inc. (New Britain)
Hall-Brooke, Inc (Bridgeport and Norwalk)
Hands on Hartford, Inc. (Hartford)
Harbor Health, Inc. (Branford and East Haven)
Immaculate Conception Shelter and Housing, Inc (Hartford)
Interfaith, Inc (Norwalk and Westport)
Laurel House, Inc (Stamford)
Leeway, Inc. (Hamden and New Haven)
Liberty Community Services, Inc (New Haven)
Mercy Shelter and Housing, Inc. (Hartford and Middletown)
Midwestern Connecticut Council on Alcoholism, Inc. (MCCA) (Danbury)
McCall Foundation, Inc. (Torrington)
Mental Health Association of CT, Inc. (Torrington)
My Sister's Place, Inc. (Hartford)
New Haven Home Recovery, Inc. (New Haven and Suburbs)
Operation Hope, Inc. (Fairfield)
Reliance House, Inc. (Norwich)
Rushford, Inc. (Meriden)
Sound Community Services, Inc. (New London)
St. Luke's Lifeworks, Inc (Stamford)
St. Vincent de Paul (Middletown)
St Vincent de Paul Place (Waterbury)
Thames River Community Service, Inc. (New London and Norwich)
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc (TVCCA) (New London, Norwich and Willimantic)
United Services, Inc. (Willimantic)
Women's Center, Inc. (Groton and New London)



Appendix 14 – SUPPORTIVE HOUSING QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING GUIDELINES

**As Administered by the State of Connecticut
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
Department of Social Services (DSS)
Department of Children and Families (DCF)**

August 31, 2010

Definitions:

“Adults with special needs” means an individual or head of household (age 18 or older) who:

- a. has severe and prolonged mental illness and/or chronic chemical dependency (the head or heads of household, in the case of families); and
- b. is homeless or at risk of homelessness at the time of application for housing; and
- c. has an income at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (“AMI”) as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) at the time of entering the housing.

“At risk of homelessness” means that the person or family does not meet any of the definitions of homelessness but does meet one of the following conditions:

- a. Is living in a situation where the person/family is at great risk of losing their housing; or
- b. Is coming out of a treatment program, institution, transitional living program, half-way house, or incarceration with no place to go (this includes community-supervised offenders supervised by the executive or judicial branch); or
- c. Is living in an inappropriate housing situation. Examples of persons living in inappropriate housing includes those in units without heat or running water, persons living in unsafe or abusive environments, and persons living in overcrowded, illegal, or unsafe dwelling units.

“Chronic chemical dependence” means a substantial history of at least one year of psychological dependence upon mood altering chemicals, with or without prior treatment episodes, to the extent that the dependence interferes with social, emotional, economic and/or physical functioning, and includes evidence of substantial life losses as a result of substance abuse.

“Family with special needs” means one or more adults with at least one dependent child aged fourteen (14) or younger, and:

- a. that has been repeatedly homeless;
- b. that meets the eligibility criteria under the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) Program but has become ineligible or are at risk of ineligibility for TANF cash assistance due to time limits;
- c. may have multiple barriers to housing stability (e.g., head of household with cognitive limitations, history of trauma, mental illness and/or chemical dependency);
- d. that may be presently involved in the DCF system; and
- e. who have incomes at or below 50% of AMI at the time of entering housing.

“Homeless” means that a person or family resides in one of the following places or circumstances:

- a. Places not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings;
- b. Emergency shelters;
- c. Transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or otherwise outdoors or an emergency shelter;
- d. Any of the above places but is spending a short period of time, up to ninety (90) consecutive days, in a hospital or other institution;
- e. Is being evicted within one week from a private dwelling and no subsequent residence has been secured and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing; or
- f. Is being discharged within one week from an institution in which the person has been resident for no more than ninety (90) consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been secured and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing;
- g. In the case of families, the term “homeless” also includes families living doubled up with other families in accordance with The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Subtitle B- Education for Homeless Children and Youth which defines “homeless children and youth” as “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.”

“Imminently homeless” means that the individual or family has documented evidence (i.e., notice to quit, letter, or evidence related to foreclosure, etc.) that he/she/they will lose their housing in less than thirty (30) days.

“Permanent supportive housing” means housing not of a transitional nature that has as its primary purpose assisting the individual or family to live independently in the community and meet the obligations of tenancy. Supportive housing combines decent, safe and affordable housing with individualized support services. All tenants of this housing must have access to flexible, individualized services for as long as they are needed in order to achieve and retain permanent housing, increase their life skills and income, and achieve greater self-determination. The following are criteria of permanent supportive housing:

- a. Tenants have individual apartment units;
- b. Tenants hold leases;
- c. The length of stay is not limited and is determined by the individual or family tenant as long as the tenant is in lease compliance;
- d. Housing affordability is assured either through a rental subsidy or through rents that are set at levels affordable to the target tenant population;
- e. The tenant’s use of services or programs is not a condition of tenancy;
- f. The tenant has access to a flexible array of comprehensive services including medical and wellness, mental health, substance abuse management and recovery, vocational and employment, money management, coordinated support (case management), life skills, household establishment and tenant advocacy;
- g. There is a working partnership that includes ongoing communication between the supportive services provider, property owner, and property management entity;
- h. Projects may include both individuals and families with special needs and individuals and families without such needs; and
- i. Where tenancy is mixed in a single site, project sponsors shall allow tenants access to on-site services without regard to whether or not the tenant has identified special needs.

- j. “Persons or families experiencing chronic homelessness” is based on the federal definition wherein a chronically homeless individual is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition including substance use disorder, serious mental illness, or chronic physical illness who has either been continually homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. In defining the chronically homeless, the term “homeless” means a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) or in an emergency homeless shelter.

Recognizing that there are families with minor children who should also be considered as experiencing chronic – or long term – homelessness, this definition also includes homeless families with:

- a. a parent with a diagnosable mental and/or physical disability;
- b. a parent who has experienced significant trauma;
- c. involvement with the child welfare system, including children who have been placed in out-of-home care;
- d. a parent reentering the community from jail or prison; or
- e. a child with serious medical or emotional disturbance/disability.

“Project sponsor” means the organization or entity that has primary responsibility for the development and operation of the housing development.

“Service-enriched units” means units of housing which have been set-aside for formerly homeless residents of the targeted populations (as defined herein) and that will receive a social and case management support services subsidy allocation funded by DMHAS, DSS, or DCF.

“Severe and prolonged mental illness” means that the individual or head or household (in the case of families) has a substantial history of a serious psychiatric disorder that has required:

- a. recent hospitalization; or
- b. multiple or lengthy psychiatric hospitalizations in the past; or
- c. extensive community treatment and support services over a sustained period of time; or
- d. the person exhibits signs and symptoms of a psychiatric disorder of sufficient severity to cause a current disturbance in several areas of role performance.

“Young adult with special needs” means an individual aged 18 – 23 who:

- a. is homeless or transitioning from youth systems such as foster care or residential programs and are at imminent risk of homelessness; and
- b. would not be able to retain stable housing without tightly linked support services; and
- c. has income at or below 50% AMI at the time of entering housing.

1. Housing and Services Relationship

- a. There shall be a demonstrated collaboration between the social services provider entity and the project sponsor, or its authorized representative, which fosters effective communication. Preferably, this will be specified in a memorandum of understanding, but at a minimum, through regular documented meetings between the service provider entity and the project sponsor or its authorized representative.
- b. The service provider, project sponsor/owner and property management personnel assigned to a project may avail themselves of training and technical assistance to foster a collaborative relationship. Such trainings may be offered from time to time by the Corporation for Supportive Housing and/or DMHAS.
- c. Service provider entities with experience in working with supportive housing residents are provided on the list on page 6 of this Appendix.

2. Intake and Assessment of Tenants

Service provider shall conduct intakes and comprehensive assessments of all tenants receiving services and this must be documented in charts to be maintained by the service agency.

- a. Chart records shall include elements as follows:
 - (1) Personal identifying information;
 - (2) Eligibility information (e.g., homelessness and/or special needs);
 - (3) Housing history;
 - (4) Employment status and prior work history;
 - (5) Other household members, as applicable;
 - (6) Service needs and identified issues;
 - (7) Issues related to disability, medical, financial, and legal concerns;
 - (8) Psychosocial history; and
 - (9) Documentation of regular re-assessment of tenants receiving services.
- b. The Fair Housing Act shall apply.
- c. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) shall apply.

3. Service Plans and Service Delivery

- a. Service provider entity adheres to a policy regarding the development of service plans between the tenant and case manager that includes the following elements:
 - (1) Evidence of a policy that states that participation in services is voluntary and not required in order to retain housing;
 - (2) Service plans are individualized and recognize both short- and long-term needs of residents and immediate household members;
 - (3) Service plans describe existing and planned linkages with vocational, educational and healthcare providers; and
 - (4) Service plan should include, as needed, strategies for relapse prevention and management as well as linkages to appropriate treatment.

- b. Case management services should meet the following criteria:
 - (1) Reflect individualized service plans;
 - (2) Remain distinct from property management, i.e., case manager does not perform functions of the landlord or property manager such as collecting rents and/or evicting tenants; and
 - (3) Provide services that help link tenants with mainstream and other community resources.

4. Agency and Program Policies

- a. Admission and discharge policies criteria include the following:
 - (1) Clear eligibility and selection criteria;
 - (2) Selection is based on first-come first-served basis;
 - (3) Policies are applied consistently;
 - (4) Written policy exists regarding discharge; and
 - (5) Grievance procedure is available for applicants and tenants.
- b. A separate waiting list for persons with special needs shall be maintained and applicants on this list shall have priority for any units that may become vacant after the initial rent-up period, up to the required number of units.
- c. An effective collaborative working relationship shall be maintained between the project sponsor/owner, property manager and service provider.

5. Review Process

- a. All supportive housing components of LIHTC proposals shall be reviewed by DMHAS with the intent to conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation.
- b. DMHAS shall review proposals to determine fidelity to the permanent supportive housing model (herein defined), and that housing to be provided will be for adults, young adults or families with special needs.
- c. DMHAS shall review the service plan and any Memoranda of Understanding (if applicable) to ensure that the needs of the tenants are met.
- d. DMHAS will provide its findings to CHFA.

6. Monitoring Process

- a. If selected for funding through the LIHTC program, the service provider must agree to the requirements of DMHAS to:
 - (1) participate in an ongoing audit for purposes of quality assurance;
 - (2) participate in an annual site visit/field observation specifically to evaluate the service components of the development project, service program operations and client outcomes.
- b. If during the annual site visit or audit process, the service provider expresses a desire for technical assistance or training, DMHAS will provide guidance in obtaining support, including strengthening service provider capacity, if needed.