

MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY HOMELESS ALLIANCE

RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) STANDARDS

(Approved 2/9/23)

I. BACKGROUND

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), via its Emergency Solutions Grant Rules and Regulations (ESG) and the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Continuum of Care Program Interim Rules, requires that Continuums of Care (CoC) establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC and ESG assistance. The intent is that these standards apply to all RRH projects, regardless of funding source, but in some cases ESG and CoC Program requirements differ enough that different standards were written.

II. STANDARDS

The following standards shall be incorporated into the RRH projects' Policies and Procedures.

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD A.1: RRH projects serve individuals and families who are literally homeless and lack the income and/or supports to end homelessness on their own.

1. Literally homeless individuals/families (HUD Category 1)

Literal homelessness is defined as homeless individuals/families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- 1.1 Sleeping in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, such a place not meant for human habitation;
- 1.2 Living in emergency shelter or transitional housing designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotel/motel stays paid for by charitable or government programs); or
- 1.3 Exiting an institution where the individual resided for less than 90 days and where the individual entered the institution immediately from emergency shelter (including hotel/motel stays paid for by charitable or government programs) or an unsheltered location.

2. Fleeing Domestic Violence (HUD Category 4)

Those who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions may also be served with RRH.

- 2.1 Applicants who fit Category 4 may be served with Continuum of Care RRH funds even if they are not yet literally homeless.

- 2.2 For ESG RRH, however, the applicant must be fleeing DV *and* in a literally homeless situation.

3. Lack of sufficient income and/or supports

To be eligible for RRH, individuals and families must lack the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain housing on their own. No specific income limit is set by the CoC, but RRH providers must document that each household served lacks the available resources to remedy their homeless situation without intervention and would remain literally homeless but for RRH assistance.

- 3.1 The household must not exceed the income limit imposed by the CoC grantee based on local need and conditions. CoC and ESG grantees shall declare their income limits, if any are imposed, for the program and advertise it to prospective applicants as part of the written Policies and Procedures for their RRH program.
- 3.2 Third party documentation of income is preferred.
- 3.3 Second party documentation (e.g., case manager verbal confirmation from official source).
- 3.4 Self-declaration of income can be used to document/verify income when third party documentation and second party verification cannot be obtained.

STANDARD A.2: RRH projects may accept referrals only through the OR-504 CoC's Coordinated Entry (CE) system and must follow the region's CE System Handbook, incorporated into the CoC Governance Charter.

STANDARD A.3: RRH projects must prioritize assistance for individuals and families with the greatest needs, who cannot otherwise be served by a more intensive resource. Prioritization methods are described in the region's CE System Handbook, incorporated into the CoC Governance Charter.

STANDARD A.4: RRH projects shall abide by HUD and CoC documentation and record-keeping requirements, including requirements for documenting homeless status and project eligibility.

1. Acceptable documentation of homeless status for persons not fleeing domestic violence includes the following, in order of priority:

- 1.1 Third party written verification of homelessness (e.g., documentation on letterhead from shelter or TH project).
- 1.2 Second party verbal verification from a case worker, outreach worker, or program staff, only after case worker has documented due diligence in attempting to obtain third-party written and second party verbal verification of homeless status.

- 1.3 Self-certification of homeless status only if neither third-party written verification nor second-party (verbal) verification could be obtained and attempts to obtain such verification has been documented.
2. Acceptable documentation of persons fleeing domestic violence is an oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. Statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker.

STANDARD A.5: At a minimum, RRH projects must include case management, but it may also include other services, such as tenancy supports. Examples of eligible costs are listed below, however, each project will have a budget of ALLOWABLE costs approved by HUD.

1. Eligible ESG-funded Project Rental Assistance

- 1.1 Rental assistance on behalf of RRH clients, up to a maximum of 24 months
- 1.2 Security deposits (up to 2X rent)
- 1.3 Utility deposits and payments (up to 24 months, including up to 6 months for payments in arrears)
- 1.4 Rental application fees
- 1.5 Moving costs

2. Eligible CoC-funded Project Rental Assistance

- 2.1 Rental assistance on behalf of RRH clients, up to a maximum of 24 months
- 2.2 Security deposits (up to 2X rent)
- 2.3 Property damages up to one month's rent, one time per participant
- 2.4 Eligible in the CoC Program funded Supportive Services budget
- 2.5 Moving costs
- 2.6 Utility deposits

STANDARD A.6: RRH projects may provide rental assistance only for units that meet safety and cost standards.

1. Unit Inspections

- 1.1 ESG-funded RRH projects must complete HUD Habitability Standards inspections on all housing units prior to providing rental assistance, and only provide rental assistance for units that have passed inspections. Alternately, HUD HQS inspections may be used instead of the Habitability Inspection. RRH projects must document units have passed inspection.
- 1.2 CoC-funded RRH projects must complete Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections on all housing units prior to providing rental assistance, and only provide rental assistance for units that passed inspections. RRH projects must document units that have passed inspection.

2. Rental Payment Amount

- 2.1 RRH-assisted units must comply with HUD's Rent Reasonableness Standards, documenting reasonableness by using comparisons with local rentals of similar size, type, and amenities.
- 2.2 ESG-funded RRH projects may pay no more in gross monthly rental assistance than the applicable Fair Market Rent (FMR). If only other financial assistance is provided, such as a security deposit, the unit must only meet the reasonable rent threshold.
- 2.3 CoC RRH funds may pay no more in monthly rental assistance than the rent reasonable amount.

3. Lead-Based Paint

- 3.1 RRH projects must complete visual assessments for lead-based paint on all housing units built prior to 1978 that may house households with children under age 6, or with a pregnant person in the household.
- 3.2 RRH projects must ensure any needed repairs are made, prior to providing rental assistance
- 3.3 RRH staff conducting visual assessments for lead-based paint must successfully complete required training.
- 3.4 RRH projects must provide all client households, regardless of whether or not children are in the home, with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved information pamphlet about identifying and controlling lead-based paint hazards, and collect a client signature indicating the information was received.
- 3.5 Lead disclosure information can be found here:
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/enforcement/disclosure

STANDARD A.7: RRH clients must have standard lease agreements with landlords when monthly rental assistance is being provided on behalf of clients.

1. ESG-funded RRH projects may have no required minimum lease term.
2. CoC-funded RRH projects must have leases between landlords and RRH clients for an initial term of one year and renewable for a minimum of one month, and terminable only for cause.
3. Leases between landlords and RRH clients must abide by Oregon landlord-tenant law and not include additional requirements

STANDARD A-8. RRH projects shall conduct activities associated with working with landlords and/or property managers (referred to as "landlords" hereafter) to expand and retain RRH housing options, and activities associated with working with RRH clients to overcome housing barriers and identify housing options.

1. Working with Clients

- 1.1 RRH projects must offer support to clients to help them identify housing units and develop plans to overcome the most critical housing barriers.
- 1.2 RRH projects must offer to educate clients on the obligations of their lease agreement, as well as the elements of landlord-tenant law.
- 1.3 RRH projects shall request that clients contact the project first if issues or concerns with the housing unit or landlord arise; then RRH project staff can work with clients to try to preserve the housing unit or develop a plan for moving into another unit while avoiding eviction.

2. Working with Landlords

- 2.1 RRH projects shall engage in intentional and specific landlord recruitment activities to help ensure access to housing options that are accessible to RRH clients with significant housing barriers.
- 2.2 RRH projects shall provide support to landlords who are housing RRH clients to help ensure that landlord-tenant issues are addressed quickly and positively and in ways that help preserve access to quality housing options.

B. HOUSING IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD B.1: RRH projects shall engage in the following comprehensive Housing Identification services.

1. Housing Search and Support

- 1.1 Identify and understand tenant needs and housing barriers; help clients develop strategies to overcome critical housing barriers.
- 1.2 Assist RRH clients with housing search by providing lists of local rental properties and tips on finding suitable housing; offer applicants direct assistance, such as from a housing placement advocate or navigator, if available.
- 1.3 Assist clients in explaining RRH program services and financial assistance to prospective landlords; request Reasonable Accommodations for clients when appropriate.

2. Landlord Recruitment and Support

- 2.1 Recruit landlords willing to rent to program participants with housing barriers, including those who may fail typical tenant screening criteria.
- 2.2 Explain program rules and services provided, lease/contract terms and expectations, and responsibilities of tenant, landlord, and agency.
- 2.3 Retain landlords by providing mediation and regular communication to address concerns and/or issues with tenants.
- 2.4 Respond to landlord issues quickly; when feasible, within one business day.

STANDARD B.2: RRH projects shall provide RRH assistance only to rental units that are habitable. (See Standard A.6.)

STANDARD B.3: RRH projects must develop Occupancy Standards as part of their written Policies and Procedures.

1. Unit Size

1.1 RRH projects may follow occupancy guidelines developed by the assigned Public Housing Authority or develop their own; standards shall be written and made available to applicants of the RRH project.

1.2 In general, standards shall allow for 1 to 2 persons per bedroom. Participants who choose a unit which is larger or smaller than the size for which they have been approved must meet the rent standard for the smaller unit.

1.2.1 Example A: A single person wishes to live in a two-bedroom unit. The gross rent of the unit, including applicable utility allowance, must be reasonable compared to one-bedroom units in the local area.

1.2.2 Example B: A family of five is determined to be eligible for a three-bedroom unit but chooses a two-bedroom unit instead. The unit rent must be reasonable with comparable two-bedroom units in the local area, even though the family qualified for a larger unit.

C. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD C.1: RRH projects must provide comprehensive Financial Assistance services.

1. Determine Rental Assistance

1.1 RRH projects shall determine the amount and duration of rental assistance.

1.2 Per HUD regulations, rental assistance cannot be provided to a program participant who is already receiving rental assistance or operating assistance through other federal, state, or local sources [§578.51(a)].)

2. Determine Move-in Assistance

2.1 Move-in assistance includes providing clients with resources and supplies before they move from shelter into housing. This can include RRH eligible costs such as moving truck rental or hiring a moving company, as well as assistance provided by other community partners such as furniture, food, and toiletries.

2.2 Rent and move-in assistance needs to be flexible and matched to the needs of the client in order to move clients into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

2.3 In order to serve the largest number of homeless clients possible, RRH projects should provide the least amount of assistance needed to stabilize people in permanent housing quickly.

- 2.4 RRH projects shall determine the type and amount of move-in assistance, i.e., security deposits, first/last month's rent, or additional assistance allowable under HUD rules.
 - 2.1.1 RRH projects shall use income information to determine the financial assistance needed for a client's move-in.
 - 2.1.2 RRH projects shall determine if utility deposits are needed, how much security deposit may be needed, and if moving truck rental assistance is needed.
 - 2.1.3 RRH projects shall determine limits that will be placed on the type or amount of move-in assistance covered with RRH funds. Limits must be spelled out in the written Policies and Procedures developed for the project and must match the categories selected for funding on the CoC project application or ESG state work plan.

3. Make Payment to Landlords

- 3.1 RRH projects shall provide payments directly to the vendor (as in the landlord or utility company) for rental assistance, utilities, and any other move-in related costs, as needed and as cost effectively as possible.

STANDARD C.2: RRH projects shall provide move-in assistance that is tailored to individual need. (See Standard C.1.)

STANDARD C.3: RRH clients who have income and are able to contribute towards rent shall pay a contribution towards their rent, whenever possible.

1. Client Contribution Determination

- 1.1 For households served with CoC or ESG RRH funds, the RRH project may adopt its own standard, based on client need and ability to pay rent share. The RRH project must disclose its policy in writing and apply the same standard to all persons served in their area with CoC or ESG RRH funds.
- 1.2 Households served under CoC-funded RRH programs shall pay no more than 30% of their adjusted gross income toward rent each month during the term of their assistance. Rent calculations must include monthly utility allowances established by the local public Housing Authority for utilities that the tenant pays separately.
- 1.3 Client income must be calculated in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609 and 24 CFR 5.611(a).
- 1.4 If an RRH client has no income, then no rent contribution is required. This must be documented per HUD requirements for verifying income.

2. Utility Reimbursement

- 2.1 CoC RRH programs are required to pay a utility reimbursement to participants whose utility allowance exceeds their rent contribution.

- 2.2 The CoC RRH program must pay that amount either as a monthly reimbursement to the participant, or directly to the participant's utility company.
- 2.3 Participants must be notified in writing of the amount of monthly utility allowance to be paid, pursuant to HUD Notice CPD 17-11. Details can be found at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-17-11-Determining-Program-Participant-Rent-Contribution-in-the-CoC-Program.pdf>

STANDARD C.4: RRH projects must provide rental assistance for a duration of time that is tailored to individual need.

1. Duration of Rental Assistance

- 1.1 RRH projects shall, on a regular basis as specified in written RRH Policies and Procedures, assess client's financial need to determine if additional rental assistance should be provided by the RRH project.
- 1.2 RRH projects may provide no more than 24 months of rental assistance to any one client. A maximum of 24 months of assistance, over a three-year period, is allowable, but should only be provided in very rare cases.
- 1.3 Based on a client's current need, program staff shall determine the duration of continuing rental assistance. The time period of continued RRH assistance must be spelled out by the RRH Provider so that it is clear to the RRH client. Duration of assistance, including extensions, shall not exceed 24 months total.

2. Recertification (at the start of each new fiscal year)

- 2.1 If serving an RRH client with more than 12 months rental assistance, RRH program staff must, at a minimum, recertify and document program eligibility including household income, resources, and continued need for assistance to prevent homelessness.
- 2.2 RRH projects must recertify income for participants in CoC and ESG RRH programs annually, at a minimum. Those being served with ESG RRH must be at or below 30% of Area Median Income at their 12-month recertification in order to qualify for additional assistance. CoC-funded RRH projects shall set their own written policy on income limits at renewal as well as how often participant income shall be reviewed during the term of the assistance.

3. Special Circumstances

- 3.1 RRH Programs may continue to make rental payments on behalf of a CoC program participant that is institutionalized for a brief period, not to exceed 90 days for each occurrence. Rental assistance may only be paid on a vacant unit for the month following the program participant's departure from the unit.
- 3.2 RRH projects are subject to Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) requirements. Families receiving CoC RRH tenant-based rental assistance who separate from non-transferring family members as part of their VAWA emergency transfer plan shall continue to receive assistance under the RRH project. The individual or family who

is transferring shall retain their original homeless or chronically homeless status. RRH grantees are not obligated to continue assistance for the non-transferring family members but may do so on a case-by-case basis, if funding is available. RRH projects are encouraged to work with community partners to provide services to stabilize the family members who are left behind after an emergency transfer.

D. CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD D.1: RRH projects must provide comprehensive case management and services.

1. Case Management Services

- 1.1 RRH projects must require program participants to meet with a case manager not less than once per month to assist them in achieving long-term housing stability.
 - 1.1.1 An RRH project is exempt from this requirement if the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 ([42 U.S.C. 13925](#)*et seq.*) or the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act ([42 U.S.C. 10401](#)*et seq.*) prohibits the grantee carrying out the project from making its housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services.
 - 1.1.2 An RRH project is exempt from this requirement if the funding source prohibits the grantee carrying out the project from making housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services.
- 1.2 RRH case managers shall assess participants to determine needs and barriers to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. Use of VI-SPDAT information as well as motivational interviews may be used to help determine these factors
- 1.3 Case management services include assistance with accessing mainstream benefits; referrals to resources that can help the participant address barriers to housing stability; and help with basic budgeting, energy education, landlord-tenant education, including Fair Housing Law, and other life skills that help the household properly maintain their unit.

2. Case Management Protocols

- 2.1 Case managers are encouraged to use strength-based, trauma-informed practices with clients to maximize success and minimize re-traumatization.
- 2.2 Case managers shall create and maintain files on each RRH household served. Files must contain required eligibility documentation, copies of leases, correspondence, and records of all financial assistance provided. Files must be secured per data security and confidentiality policies of each agency.
 - 2.2.1 Comprehensive case notes on all meetings with participants, landlords, and other providers who may be assisting with case coordination shall be kept by the Case Manager for each RRH participant file (hard copy and/or electronic). Notes should include any referrals to internal and external resources provided to the client

- 2.3 Follow-up reviews shall be performed on all exited clients at required intervals, as determined by program rules. Follow-up reviews shall be entered into HMIS or comparable system for DV providers.

STANDARD D.2: RRH projects shall develop and follow a written formal process when terminating RRH assistance for a client.

1. Termination Policy and Process

- 1.1 Written Termination and Hearing Rights Policy must be given to each RRH participant at project entry.
- 1.2 When seeking to terminate assistance, agency must provide written notice to the participant containing a clear statement of reasons for termination, as well as the process for the participant to file a formal appeal of the termination.
- 1.3 Clients requesting a hearing on the termination shall be granted the opportunity to present oral or written testimony to someone other than the staff person who recommended the termination.
- 1.4 Records of all denials, terminations, appeals, and hearings shall be kept as part of the client file.