Coordinated Assessment-RRH

Policy and Procedures

Approved February 14, 2017

BACKGROUND

The Alliance for Housing (Oakland County's Continuum of Care) consists of a network of organizations providing services to those in housing crisis. Through a variety of grants and funding streams, the continuum of care and the organizations that are part of this membership, has an array of programs that provide short term financial assistance and housing stabilization services, including housing case management, within the local community. Operating with a coordinated assessment model, the programs work together to serve the needs of the community.

Funding comes from a variety of resources, including directly from HUD (Housing and Urban Development), as well as from the state housing authority (MSHDA ESG – Michigan State Housing Development Authority Emergency Solutions Grant) and local government. Additional funds may come into the community through grants and foundations, as well as other funding sources, which may change year to year.

Providers

There are multiple providers that have rapid rehousing and/or prevention assistance within the community. Currently the providers are as follows:

- Community Housing Network
  Funding Sources: MSHDA and HUD Funding

- South Oakland Shelter
  Funding Sources: HUD funding through OC ESG, United Way of Southeastern Michigan

- Lighthouse
  Funding Sources: HUD Funding

PROCEDURE

Screening

The Oakland County CoC continues to use a "no wrong door" approach which has proven highly effective in our community as part of our coordinated assessment model. This local process allows a person that presents with an episode of homelessness or housing crisis ability to access services and program regardless of which organization or agency they approach throughout our collaborative partners.

A QSOBAA (Qualified Service Organization Business Associate Agreement) was put in place to allow for sharing of information. Community partners are able to utilize a community wide assessment that allows each partner utilizing HMIS to assess and refer those who are in a housing crisis for available RRH (Rapid Rehousing) and Prevention funding. This assessment was tailored to the essentials (including new HUD standard questions and a VI SPDAT[1]) to determine potential eligibility for short term financial assistance to streamline the system, without duplication of HARA duties, and does not take the place of other assessments for other programs. Each partner agency, with the exception of the DV Shelters, has the ability to make a referral, or alternately to choose to have the potential program participant call.

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It is important to note that any individual or household that presents to the Housing Resource Center receives assistance regardless of their eligibility to any single program. No matter what the housing need, or if the person is currently housed and looking for alternative housing, has a housing crisis, or finds themselves homeless, the Housing Resource Center provides an in depth consistent screening and linked with community resources as well as other options which may include but are not limited to a housing choice voucher application with MSHDA, special needs units, subsidized housing, street outreach, etc. The important distinction is that not everyone is able to receive services or assistance from the staff that is directly funded by the HARA but no one is ever turned away in our current system.

[1] VI – SPDAT is the Vulnerability Index which provides a screening to determine need. Both assessments are used to assess need and risk factors for persons that present as homeless.

Additionally the community has made a commitment to serve those with the highest need through HUD and MSHDA funding. A VI SPDAT is utilized for those who are Category I Homeless. Thresholds and scoring criteria are incorporated into organizations' internal policies in alignment with community established thresholds. When there is limited funding to serve the community, compared to presented the need, the threshold may be increased to ensure that those with the most need (i.e. highest vulnerability demonstrated through VI score and/or chronic homelessness) are served. When more funding is available, the threshold may be reduced to assist as many potential program participants at possible with this assistance.

Community Organizations and Policies

Each community partner/organization will compile internal policies and procedures. For programs that receive direct HUD funding the policies and procedures will be in accordance with the parameters set forth from 24 CFR 578. In other instances, additional guidelines, policies and restrictions may be added in accordance with the direct funder. Grants from other providers may have different parameters based on the funder's specific requirements or objectives.

Historically, HUD funding has been utilized to assist with both rental assistance (monthly rental payments as well as security deposits) and utility payments in accordance with utility allowances. This has assisted the program participants with zero to minimal income in sustaining the housing through the grant term. Other programs, such as OC MSHDA ESG RRH, do not allow for current utility assistance but may be able to assist with utility arrearages.

A grid is developed annually and updated as needed that provides a general overview of the different funding sources available in the community in terms of RRH and Prevention dollars. This grid provides an outline in terms of specific differences between programs so that program participants can be routed to the program and services that best meet their need.