

# Miami-Dade Homeless Continuum of Care Rapid Rehousing Standards of Care and Policies

## I. PURPOSE OF CoC RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Continuum of Care Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Programs provide financial assistance and services to help individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. Based on a determination of need, such assistance may be in the form of move-in expenses, limited rental assistance, housing search and placement assistance and housing stability case management.

Such programs are operated by local community-based agencies and supported by multiple funding sources. Access to the Miami-Dade County's CoC RRH Programs is coordinated through the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust's Coordinated Outreach and Assessment Process as described below. The Standards of Care for the provision of RRH Programs funded by and/or through the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (Homeless Trust) are set forth below.

## II. RAPID RE-HOUSING COAP SCREENING, REFERRAL, HMIS PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY PROVISIONS

### A. Assessment

Homeless families and individuals seeking assistance will first be assessed through the Homeless Continuum of Care's Coordinated Outreach and Assessment Process (COAP). Based on the assessment outcome, families and individuals will be referred for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) assistance.

### B. Referral Standard

#### Non-Veteran Homeless Families and Individuals

The COAP utilizes the VI-SPDAT to conduct initial assessment for CoC assistance. Homeless families and individuals will be referred for CoC assistance using HMIS based on preference for chronicity, vulnerability and other factors.

- Families: Upon referral for CoC RRH, families will be further assessed using the **CoC RRH Triage Tool** issued by the Homeless Trust, as may be amended from time-to-time (**Attachment A**).
  - Applicants identified as needing short-term rental assistance and no to nominal housing stabilization and location search services will be referred to the HAND Program funded by ESG and other sources.
  - In the event that applicants are determined to be in need of permanent supportive housing, such households will be referred back to COAP.
- Individuals who score within the range of 5-9 on the VI/SPDAT will be referred to CoC RRH and further assessed for RRH assistance utilizing the CoC RRH Triage Tool as described above. Individuals scoring 10 or higher will be referred to permanent supportive housing.

## Veteran Homeless Families and Individuals

During the COAP, homeless families who report a veteran member or individuals who identify as a veteran will be referred to the Veterans Administration for housing and services assistance. Such families and individuals will be initially assessed using the VI-SPDAT. Veteran homeless families and individuals will be referred for VA-funded RRH assistance if they score within the following ranges on the VI-SPDAT:

- Families scoring within the range of 1-6.
- Individuals scoring within the range of 1-4.

VI-SPDAT assessment and referral information generated by the VA will be captured in the Homeless Trust's HMIS.

### **C. HMIS Participation and Confidentiality**

All providers of RRH assistance must participate in the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) under an HMIS Participation Agreement and subject to the HMIS Standards, Policies and Procedures.

Further, all providers shall comply with the Homeless Trust's Confidentiality Policies and Procedures.

## **III.**

### **APPLICATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Application Form**

1. Applicants for RRH assistance must complete the **Standard CoC RRH Application** issued by the Homeless Trust, as may be amended from time to time (**Attachment B**). Required documents are incorporated into the Standard RRH Application package.
2. The Standard RRH Application will be the sole application form utilized by all agencies providing CoC RRH assistance.

#### **B. Application Process**

Referral to the CoC RRH Program will be made through the COAP. In the event that an applicant is currently residing in a CoC emergency or transitional program, such program will assist the applicant in completing and submitting the application package. Otherwise, the CoC RRH Program will assist the applicant in completing the application package.

#### **C. Assessment for Level of RRH Assistance**

Upon application, the household will be assessed using the CoC RRH Triage Tool to determine the appropriate length of rental assistance and level housing stabilization and location search services to be provided by the CoC RRH Program (*see Part IV*).

Applicants may be referred to the HAND Program or referred back to COAP for permanent supportive housing as may be determined during RRH Triage assessment.

## IV. TERMS OF RRH ASSISTANCE

### A. Terms for Assistance

FUNDS	HEARTH CoC
Income Limit	50% of Area Median Income
Additional Eligibility Criteria and Triage	<p>Upon referral for CoC RRH, applicants will be further assessed using the CoC RRH Triage Tool (<i>Attachment B</i>) to determine the length of rental assistance and level of housing stabilization and relocation services.</p> <p>Applicants identified as needing short-term rental assistance and no to nominal housing stabilization and location search services will be referred to the HAND Program funded by ESG and other sources.</p> <p>In the event that applicants are determined to be in need of permanent supportive housing, such households will be referred back to COAP.</p>
Form of assistance available and maximum period of assistance.	<p><b>Housing Stabilization and Relocation Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Management and Housing Search</li> <li>• Application Fees</li> </ul> <p><b>Rapid Re-Housing Rental Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security Deposits</li> <li>• Rental Assistance up to Six Months               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After the third month, the program will make a determination whether the participant requires continued assistance.</li> <li>○ Under extenuating circumstances, based on evaluation of need, rental assistance can be extended as necessary beyond six months, but no longer than 12 months.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
The percentage of rent and utilities each program participant must pay toward rent.	<p>Standard Policy*</p> <p><b>Months 1 &amp; 2:</b> Client pays 0%; Program pays 100%</p> <p><b>Month 3:</b> Client pays 25%; Program pays 75%</p> <p><b>Month 4 &amp; 5:</b> Client pays 50%; Program pays 50%</p> <p><b>Month 6:</b> Client pays 75%; Program pays 25%</p> <p>*Unless tenant documentation (financial or issues identified through Triage Tool) supports providing a larger % of rent assistance or providing additional months of rent assistance using a declining subsidy. CoC RRH Rent may not exceed 24 months.</p>

## B. Standards for Re-Evaluation of Assistance

The program will not offer assistance beyond twelve months.

However, in accordance with HUD regulations, CoC RRH providers must conduct regular re-evaluations, at least annually, of program participants receiving RRH assistance. To continue to receive CoC RRH assistance, a program participant's re-evaluation must demonstrate eligibility based on:

1. **Lack of resources and support networks:** The program participant's household must continue to lack sufficient resources and support networks to retain housing without CoC program assistance.
2. **Need:** The recipient or sub-recipient must determine the amount and type of assistance that the individual or family will need to (re)gain stability in permanent housing.

## V.

### RRH HOUSING PLANNING, CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

#### A. Housing Plan and Case Management Requirements

1. The objective of the RRH Program is to ensure that assisted households can maintain long-term housing stability following the withdrawal of monetary assistance and services.

In order for RRH participants, as tenants, to maintain housing and avoid future homelessness as a result of eviction, three behaviors are necessary:

- Pay their portion of the rent on time every month;
  - Maintain their home in a safe and sanitary condition and in the condition in which it was initially rented to them, except normal wear and tear; and
  - Avoid behavior (their own or that of a household member or guest) that would disturb their neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of their own home (i.e. yelling, loud music or noise, violence, drug use, other illegal activity, damage to, or theft of, others' property, blocking or cluttering common areas or right-of-ways).
2. An **Housing Assistance Plan (HSP)** must developed no later than **21** days of the RRH referral, the RRH provider will assist the participant in making an assessment of issues and barriers to their own housing stability and assist the participant in developing their plan to achieve housing stability during period of RRH assistance. CoC RRH programs must use the standard HSP form, which must be signed by the participant. The CoC RRH providers must use the standard HSP form issued by the Homeless Trust, as may be amended from time-to-time (**Attachment C**).
    - a. Housing stability planning must be conducted utilizing a client-centered approach.
    - b. The Housing Stability Plan must specify how the tenant will retain permanent housing and assume responsibility for the full rent amount after RRH assistance ends. The plan must take into account all relevant considerations, such as the program participant's current or expected income and expenses; other public or private assistance for which the program participant will be eligible and likely to receive; the relative affordability of available housing in the area and supportive services necessary to overcome barriers to

housing stability. The Plan must also assess the household's budgeting skills and measures to improve such skills as necessary.

- c. The RRH provider must assist the participant to identify need for, and in obtaining, appropriate supportive services including medical health treatment, mental health treatment, counseling, supervision, and other services essential for achieving independent living; and government and private benefits and financial assistance including, but not limited to Medicaid; SNAP; WIC; unemployment; SSDI/SSI, Food Stamps).
3. Assigned case managers will assist households in locating rental properties that are within the household's current or projected budget. Households will be placed within **45** days of referral.
  4. Selection of a housing unit is based on participant's choice. However the participant must select and move into an HQS-approved unit within 45 days of the date of Program's written approval of assistance. Failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of the opportunity for assistance.
  5. At least once a month, case managers will perform face-to-face home visits, however, such home visits may be made more frequently as deemed appropriate to assist the household in making progress toward housing stability.

#### **B. Time Limitations on Rent Assistance and Support Services**

##### **1. CoC-Funded RRH Services**

CoC RRH-funded supportive services may be provided until 6 months after RRH rental assistance stops.

#### **C. Staff Competency**

CoC RRH staff must have the qualifications, licensing, proper training and supervision necessary and appropriate to the job function(s) with which the staff members are entrusted.

#### **D. Non-Discrimination in Provision of Services**

There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or national origin in the provision of services to participants by agencies. No religious practice or affiliation requirement shall be imposed upon participants.

Providers shall demonstrate sensitivity to participants' primary language and cultural background.

**VI.****RRH PROGRAM RENT LIMITS****A. CoC Rent Limit**

The rent for the assisted unit must meet HUD's rent reasonableness standard.

**B. Rent Reasonableness Standard**

The rent for a unit proposed for assistance must be compared to the rent charged for comparable units in the same market area. Comparison of the proposed rent must be based on location, quality, size, unit type, age, amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities that must be paid for by the tenant.

**C. Calculating Rent**

In all cases in which the participant is required to pay a portion of rent, for purposes of calculating rent, the rent shall equal the sum of the total monthly rent for the unit, any fees required for occupancy under the lease (other than late fees and pet fees) and, if the tenant pays separately for utilities, the monthly allowance for utilities (excluding telephone) established by Miami-Dade County for the area in which the housing is located.

**VII.****RRH LEASE AND RENTAL AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS****A. Property Owner Rental Assistance Agreement**

Any unit that receives rental assistance payments through rapid re-housing must have a rental assistance agreement between the CoC RRH program paying the rent assistance and the property owner (or management company authorized to enter into the agreement and take payments on behalf of the owner).

The CoC RRH providers must use the following forms issued by the Homeless Trust, as may be amended from time to time.

- ***CoC RRH Landlord Participation Agreement (Attachment D);***
- ***CoC RRH Rental Assistance Agreement (addendum to Landlord Participation Agreement)(Attachment E); and***
- ***CoC RRH Landlord, Tenant and Case Manager Communication Agreement (Attachment F).***

**B. Lease Between Property Owner and Participant**

The participant must enter into a lease with the property owner. Although CoC RRH assistance is short to medium term rental assistance, the lease between the owner and participant must be for a term of not less than one year.

## VIII. RRH INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

### A. HQS Standards

CoC units must pass HUD Housing Quality Standards found at 24 CFR § 982.401. CoC-funded RRH Program providers must use HUD's HQS Inspection Checklist Form 52580.

## IX. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF RRH ASSISTANCE

- A. Applicants denied CoC RRH assistance must receive written notice by certified mail explaining the reason for denial, contact information for the HAND Program or COAP if the applicant is referred to one of these programs based on the RRH Assessment, the method for making an appeal of the decision to deny assistance and contact information (including name, mailing address, email and phone number) for the person designated by the CoC RRH provider to receive an appeal. Review of the decision to deny assistance if appealed shall be the same as set forth below for terminations of assistance.

The CoC RRH providers must use the standard *Denial Notice* form issued by the Homeless Trust, as may be amended from time-to-time (*Attachment G*).

- B. To terminate rental assistance or housing relocation and stabilization services to a program participant, the required formal process, at a minimum, must consist of:
1. Providing the program participant with a written copy of the program rules and the termination process before the participant begins to receive assistance;
  2. Written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination;
  3. 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
  4. Prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.
- C. Termination under this section does not bar further assistance at a later date to the same family or individual.

