

Department of Housing Individual and Family Support Programs

The goal of the Individual and Family Support Programs Unit is to provide a variety of housing services for eligible individuals to ensure adequate housing resources are available to the State's most vulnerable citizens. Through its 106 services contracts, housing options range from providing emergency shelter to permanent housing through a Section 8 or Rental Assistance Program (RAP) rental subsidy. Within this range of options are also transitional living programs, housing for individuals with AIDS (including the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)), the rapid rehousing program, the security deposit guarantee program, and the eviction and foreclosure prevention program.

Over the course of this year, the Department of Housing (DOH) will be conducting an intensive review of these programs. DOH intends to re-procure the 44 emergency shelter contracts. Emergency shelter funding is made up of both federal and state funds and a re-procurement is necessary in order to fully comply with federal regulations as well as to incorporate best practices into the State's emergency shelter system in an effort to help realize our vision of reducing and ultimately ending homelessness in Connecticut. Over the next two months, DOH, in coordination with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH), will conduct three regional meetings of emergency shelter providers to inform these agencies of the intent to rebid the funding as well as receive input from shelter providers on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

In addition, DOH will be evaluating the effectiveness of the state funded transitional living programs. National research has shown that although transitional housing may be effective for certain subpopulations of homeless individuals, permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing offer better outcomes for the larger homeless population. Therefore, DOH will consult with every transitional living program, advocates and other stakeholders over the course of the next year to determine which intervention would be the most successful for reducing homelessness in their community and make the necessary contractual changes to ensure a more functional homelessness response system.

In the context of rebidding DOH's transitional living program funds, DOH will also re-procure the federal HOPWA funds this year in order to fully comply with federal regulations. Although the amount of funding for this program is small statewide, it represents a valuable housing resource for individuals diagnosed with HIV or living with AIDS.

Finally, DOH will also rebid its rental assistance mobility counseling programs this year. DOH wants to continue to ensure that the State is actively engaged in de-concentrating poverty and increasing access to high opportunity areas for low income individuals. Re-procuring these funds will present DOH the opportunity to implement an effective model to accomplish these goals.

By deeply analyzing these 4 programs, DOH will be evaluating nearly 75 percent of DOH's contracts related to homeless services. Through the various re-procurement processes, DOH will create a homelessness response system that is more coordinated and flexible that ultimately will be able to serve more individuals and families as well as reduce the number of homeless individuals and families statewide.