



Housing Empowering Recovery from Opioids (HERO)

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Agenda

**01 Opioid
Settlement
Funds**

**02 Program
Design**

**03 Service
Provider
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**04 RAP
Vouchers**

**05 UCONN
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Evaluation**

**06 Application
Process**

Opioid Settlement Advisory Council

- The Connecticut Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee is directing \$58.6 million in funding toward a new housing initiative supporting people who face opioid use disorder and are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- At a cost of \$14.25 million a year, the initiative will help as many as 500 people annually.
- That includes vouchers through the state's Rental Assistance Program (RAP), trauma-informed case management services, peer recovery supports and client support funding for move-in costs.

Program Eligibility

- Individuals need to have:
- **Opioid Use Disorder**
- **Housing Instability (including homelessness)**

The HERO program is open for individuals as well as families where the head of household meets the criteria above.

Application Process

01

An individual with an opioid use disorder who is experiencing homelessness or housing instability applies through an online pre-screener

02

Eligible applicants' information are sent to HERO Service Provider Agencies to confirm eligibility

03

Individuals will work with Service Provider and JDA to secure housing

Provider Agencies

- DMHAS is contracting with 8 nonprofit service providers across the state. There are at least two agencies who will be working in each DMHAS region of the state.
- HERO agencies will receive the information from pre-screeners and reach out to applicants to confirm eligibility.
- These agencies can help people collect needed documents for housing, apply for their housing voucher (a RAP certificate), and find housing.
- Once participants are housed, HERO agencies can assist with apartment set-up and will provide ongoing case management and peer recovery supports.

Provider Agencies

- HERO services are required for ongoing program participation. Service agencies will meet with participants at least weekly, including one home-visit per month to provide support and linkages to care. In order to participate fully in the HERO program, engagement with case management is required.
- Case managers can serve as a liaison with landlords, can provide linkages to healthcare, recovery services, and can support the individual's goals throughout the course of the program.

Rental Assistance Program (RAP) Voucher

- These are long-term housing vouchers. The program is funded for 4 years and the goal, based on funding availability, is to continue the program further in the future.
- Tenants pay 30% of whatever income they have towards the cost of the rent. The voucher will pay the remaining cost directly to the landlord.

How will we know if HERO is helping?

UCONN Program Evaluation

- DMHAS is contracting with UCONN for a program evaluation.
- This evaluation will consist of surveys and interviews, and a review of program data. UCONN will seek feedback from the HERO service providers as well as participants to identify potential challenges and provide data analysis results to stakeholders. The results of this evaluation will be shared periodically with the Opioid Settlement Advisory Council and throughout our service system.
- Because evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods, we will have regular and meaningful information about program operations and outcomes.

I am working with someone who I think qualifies for HERO – how can I refer them?

The HERO program accepts pre-screener forms online, and we will have rolling periods of online application based on availability.

The pre-screener form is posted on the DMHAS website, and the link to the form shared broadly by DMHAS staff.

Because this program is open to the public, we anticipated many people would apply. We encouraged stakeholders and providers to prepare in advance by talking to their clients about the program and preparing to help them apply as soon as the program launched.

What do I need to apply?

- All applicants need to have an opioid use disorder. Applicants can obtain confirmation of opioid use or opioid use services from a clinician, treatment/recovery program, or healthcare providers.
- All applicants will need to provide proof of their housing instability – this can be a letter from an outreach worker, an HMIS record, a letter from the residential program they are in, or similar confirmation.
- All applicants will need a valid social security number.
- **All applicants need a phone number and email address or will need a secondary contact person for the purposes of communicating with the program.**

How long does this all take?

- This is not an immediate process – we do not have a specific building with apartments to move people into. Instead, the HERO program provides participants with a housing voucher they can use in the community. Even once applicants are confirmed as eligible and receive approval for a voucher, they will need to work with HERO staff to find an apartment.

For applicants receiving treatment in a residential program, that means it is essential that applicants make alternative plans for accommodations at the point of discharge. Even an eligible individual may not have an apartment by their discharge date.

- For those with an imminent program discharge, we encourage alternative short-term housing plans since this process can take time.



Point of Contact

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