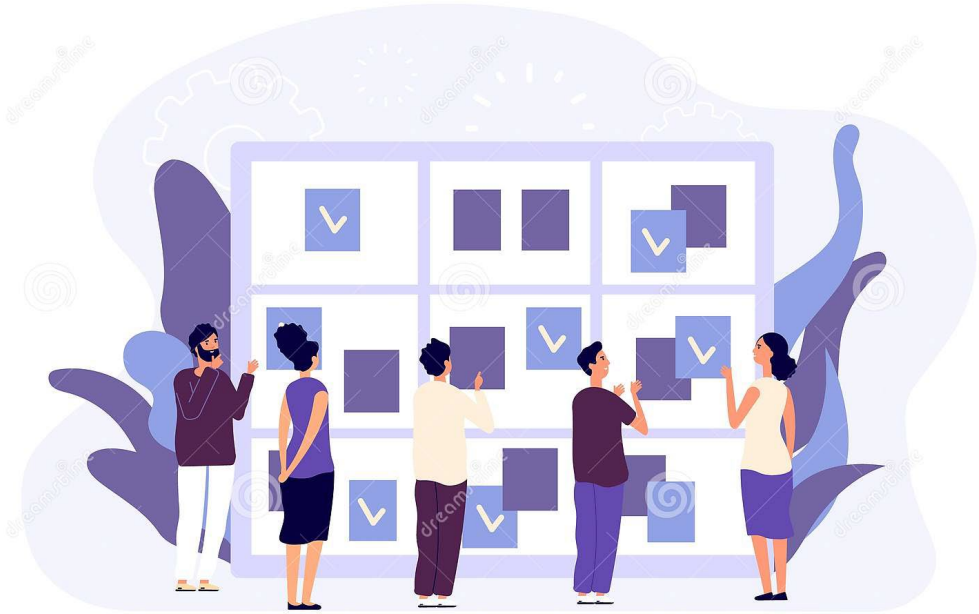
Permanent Supportive Housing Requirements & Operations Guide

JUNE 2023

Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care

Ending Homelessness in Connecticut | **Email:** ctboscoc@gmail.com | **Website:** www.ctbos.org

Lauren Pareti, Housing Innovations
Shannon Quinn-Sheeran, Housing Innovations



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Requirements & Operations Guide Background & Overview
- New & Notable Requirements
  - *All PSH*
  - *New for non-DMHAS PSH only*
- Resources
- Suggestions, Questions & Answers

What’s your role?

How long have you been involved in CoC Projects?

ZOOM POLL

Guide & Required forms

- Guide & all DMHAS required CoC Rental Assistance forms are available at http://www.ctbos.org/resources/
- Checklist of required forms for DMHAS CoC PSH projects
- Participant Chart Documentation Requirements for all CT BOS PSH

Background on the PSH Requirements & Operations Guide

- Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (DMHAS) CoC Rental Assistance(RA) Operations Guide released October 2019
- In May 2023 Steering Committee expanded applicability to all CT Balance of State (CT BOS) Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Establishes standard definitions, policies, & procedures governing all CT BOS PSH and all DMHAS CoC RA statewide.
- Covers all types of CoC PSH (Tenant, Sponsor & Project Based RA – TRA, SRA & PRA; leasing; operating)

Target Audience

- Non-profit agency staff who provide/coordinate support services for PSH participants
- Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) and non-profit agency staff who administer CoC RA and/or provide Housing Coordination Services in PSH
- Guide includes best practices that may also be helpful for staff from other types of projects.

Key Partners - Terms Used in Guide

Key Partners

- **Housing Providers** - either Local Mental Health Authorities or non-profit agencies that administer CoC Rental Assistance funds &/or provide housing coordination to project participants
- **Service Provider** - non-profit agencies that provide/coordinate support services for participants – usually DMHAS and/or CoC funded
  - Where there is no designated service provider, the Housing Provider links to the LMHA for services.
- A single agency may serve as Service Provider **and** Housing Provider.
- Specific responsibilities vary across projects.

Other Key Partners

Responsibilities defined in the Guide:

- Project Participants
- Property Owners
- DMHAS Homeless and Housing Services Unit (HHSU)
- CT Department of Housing (DOH)
- Coordinated Access Networks (CANs)
- Continuums of Care
  - CT Balance of State (CT BOS)
  - Opening Doors Fairfield County

New & Notable Requirements

The Requirements & Operations Guide Now Applies to All CT BOS PSH

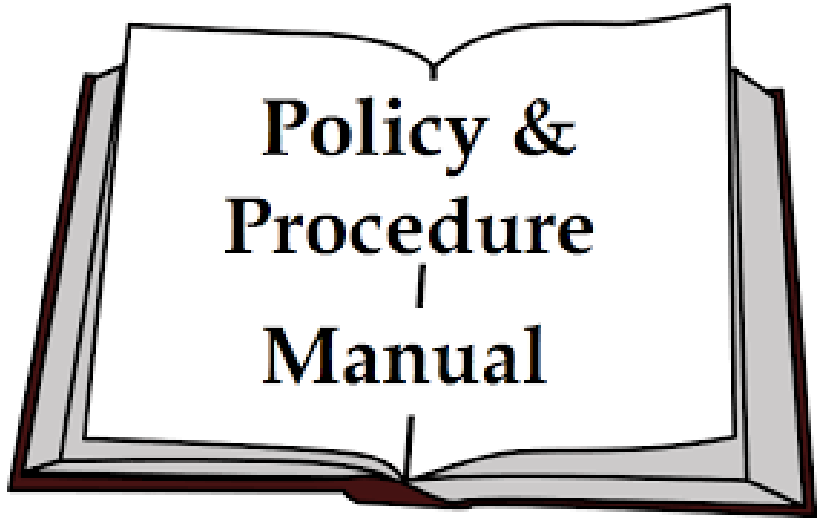
Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity (SNOFO) – PSH Disability Requirement

DMHAS PSH regular Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) projects require serious mental illness; chronic problems with alcohol, drug usage or both; or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and/or related diseases

DMHAS PSH 2022 SNOFO projects use **broader** HUD definition of disabling condition, including types of disabling conditions described above, and: a physical impairment, brain injury, or a developmental disability

All conditions must 1) be expected to be long-continuing or indefinite duration, 2) substantially impede individual's ability to live independently, and 3) potentially be improved by provision of more suitable housing conditions

NEW(ish) for all PSH



Coordinated Access Network (CAN) Policies

UPDATED MAY 2023

Emergency Transfer Notice

Required under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Participants experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking can transfer to a different housing unit for safety reasons if:

- They reasonably believe they are at imminent risk of violence if they remain in their current unit
- If a sexual assault happened in the unit or on the property within 90 days of the transfer request

CT BOS Emergency Transfer Plan

Emergency Transfer Notice (2)

All CANs and CoC/ESG funded projects are required upon application, at project entry, and at annual recertification to:

- Inform all individuals/families seeking or receiving assistance, regardless of known DV survivor status, of their rights under the emergency transfer plan and of the process to seek a transfer.
- Provide a brief user-friendly notice that clearly explains the emergency transfer rights and process

NEW DOCUMENT: Info for Residents - Emergency Transfer Plan, Spanish version

Zoom - Poll

1. Which PSH projects are required to follow the Guide?
2. What definition of disability applies to PSH projects funded under the SNOFO?
3. When are projects required to notify participants of their Emergency Transfer Rights?

Grievance Notice

Spanish version

CoC projects and Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) required to:

1) Document provision of notice to all households seeking or receiving help upon application, at project entry and at a minimum annually; and
2) Review the notice to help people understand their grievance rights.

Grievance Policy Webinar: Slides, Recording

Updated: Participant Bill of Rights, Spanish version

CT BOS Rights Notices - Acknowledgement of Receipt, Spanish version

Sample form to obtain participant sign-off for the following CT BOS Notices:

1. Client Bill of Rights
2. Emergency Transfer
3. Grievance

Providers can opt to use a different method to document notification.

Transfers between PSH Programs

When transfer deemed necessary, transfer request is initiated by the current Housing Coordinator (HC). Only participants currently enrolled in a CoC PSH program are eligible for transfer.

1. Current HC emails CAN(s), prospective HC, and DMHAS (if DMHAS project) – notify of request and include specific reason(s) prompting transfer
2. HCs work together with CAN(s) to coordinate
3. Responsibility of current HC to ensure all eligibility documentation meets eligibility criteria and is uploaded to HMIS

Transfers between PSH Programs (2)

4. For DMHAS RA projects, if proposed area has no open certificate or ability to add one, tenant may move to new area and continue to be paid by original grant and once certificate becomes available, tenant will obtain open certificate.
5. Housing Coordinator receiving referral must review all eligibility documentation and provide final determination certifying that applicant meets all HUD eligibility requirements for their program.

Income too High to Qualify for a Subsidy

- There is no income ceiling for PSH participation.
- Amount of subsidy received is based on income.
- High income can result in not receiving a subsidy; still eligible for case management services.
- Prior to re-certifying assess need/preference for ongoing case management
  - *Is case management still necessary to support housing stability?*
- DMHAS CoC RA Projects should consult with DMHAS before recertifying.
- In other types of PSH, a supervisor can make the determination.

Estimating Income

When participants have recent employment without 1 month's worth of pay stubs, provider can calculate probable income using information available

Examples:

Mr. Ryder has PT job, but recently out due to injury. Only 2 weekly pay stubs available. They have returned to work and anticipate same schedule.

- Stub 1: weekly income of $430; Stub 2: weekly income of $390
- Estimate monthly income as follows:
  - $430 + $390 = $820 (income for 2 weeks)
  - 820/2 = 410 (average weekly income)
  - 410 x 52 = 21,320 (annual income)
  - 21,320/12 =$1,777 (monthly income) – Use $1,777 as monthly income

Estimating Income – Example 2

Mrs. Thorton – occasionally gets paid overtime during peak season (recently ended). Has 4 pay stubs and 1st 2 contain overtime. Doesn't anticipate getting additional overtime this year. Stubs 3 and 4 show income at usual weekly amount of $360. Disregard stubs including overtime. Estimate monthly income as follows:

- 360 x 52/12 - $1,560 (monthly income) – use $1,560 as monthly income.

Security Deposit Refunds

- Document condition of the unit at move-in (e.g., photos in the chart)
- Document exit inspection to assess any damage caused by the Participant
- Property Owner may, subject to applicable State and local laws, use the security deposit as reimbursement for unpaid tenant rent or damages in accordance with lease
- For more information see the CT Judicial Branch page on rental security deposits.

Security Deposit Refunds (2)

- Property owner must promptly refund full amount of balance with interest
- Projects must request in writing that landlord return CoC security deposit, including the name/address to send refund
  - *DMHAS Projects: Owner must return balance to DMHAS*
  - *Non-DMHAS projects determine whether it goes back to the agency administering the security deposit or to the program participant.*

True or False: Zoom Poll

- There is an income limit for people entering PSH.
- PSH participants reaching a certain income threshold are automatically exited from the project
- Housing Providers are required to document unit conditions via photos at move-in and move-out.

Newly Required for all non-DMHAS PSH

FORMERLY BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Rental Assistance Certificate

- Applies to Rental Assistance Projects only.
- DMHAS Certificate – Must be modified for non-DMHAS projects
- Officially notifies the Participant that they have been approved for rental assistance.
- Establishes the number of bedrooms and FMR.
- Establishes an expiration date:
  - Participant has 60 days (with assistance) to locate a unit
  - Housing Provider may issue an extension for up to 60 additional days
    - For DMHAS projects additional extensions require Housing and Homeless Services Unit approval
    - For other types of PSH projects, a supervisor may approve

Income Determination and Rent Calculation

- All PSH must use DMHAS rent calculation tool.
- Participants must report income changes of more than $40/month when change is expected to be ongoing within 10 days of the change.
- Rent recalculation required for income decreases within 5 business days of the report (within 10 business days for increases).
- Must notify participant 30 days in advance of any rent increase. Increase takes effect on first day of the month following the 30-day notice. Example, notice sent on May 15th, rent increase takes effect on July 1st

Income Documentation & Recertification

- Must provide income documentation as a condition of participation.
- Provide 90 days written notice for each annual re-certification.
- Provide assistance, including reasonable accommodations as necessary.
- Documentation must be obtained for all participants regardless of disability or other barriers.
- Amounts documented must match income used in rent calculation

Notification of Rent Obligation

Housing Provider is responsible for helping participant to understand the calculation

Whenever rent is calculated must provide written notice of rent obligation. (Sample DMHAS recert letter)

New for non-DMHAS: Zoom poll

The Rental Assistance Certificate:

- Is issued at annual re-certification
- Notifies participants that they're approved for rental assistance
- Establishes amount tenant pays for rent
- Establishes number of bedrooms & FMR
- Establishes expiration date (# days to locate unit)

Which statements are true?

- All PSH must use DMHAS rent calculation tool
- Participants must report income change of more than $100 when expected to be ongoing
- Projects must notify participants 30 days prior to rent increases

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract

- Required for all Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
- DMHAS sample – must be customized for non-DMHAS projects
- Executed with lease annually
- Contract between landlord and the Housing Provider that is administering the subsidy
- Establishes contract rent (total amount due to landlord), subsidy amount, tenant portion

HAP Contract (2)

- Establishes that subsidy and tenant portions may change and obligation of Housing Provider to provide written notification of any change
- Landlord agrees to meet obligations as a condition of receiving the subsidy
- Establishes the right of the Housing Provider to withhold the subsidy for failure to meet those obligations

Supportive Service Requirements

Help participants to:

- Obtain and stabilize in housing
- Build hope and motivation
- Identify and achieve personal goals and a vision for the future
- Develop supportive relationships
- Engage in personally meaningful activities
- Regain or develop new roles in their families and communities
- Exercise control over their own lives

Supportive Service Requirements (2)

- Focus on the things most important to the participant.
- Identify and reduce risks to stable tenancy and to overall health and well-being.
- Flexible and intensive
- Low barrier, Housing First approach
- Trauma-informed
- Maximize participant choice
- Non-coercive
- Assertive Engagement (attempts documented at least 2x/month)
- Provide meaningful opportunities for participant input and involvement

Supportive Service Requirements (3)

- Needs Assessment - at least every 6 months
- Service Planning:
  - Completing initial Service Plan within 60 days of project entry
  - Update at least every 6 months
  - Specific and measurable action steps indicating who is responsible for each action and when actions will occur
  - Build on strengths
  - Help participants to identify things important to them
  - Signed by the case manager, participant, and supervisor
  - Document in case notes that assistance with achieving goals and objectives is regularly provided
- Voluntary for participants – document engagement attempts

Housing Stabilization Services

Owners are responsible for lease enforcement.

Service/Housing Providers are responsible for helping participants to understand and comply with lease, including:

- Assist to avoid/correct violations and reduce eviction risk
- Educate participants regarding lease terms
- Coordinate with owner to encourage proactive lease enforcement
- Meet with participants in their apartments as often as necessary (at least once in first 30 days of tenancy and every 6 months thereafter)
- Health and Safety Checklist at least annually approximately 6 months following HQS (Service Provider requirement)

Case Management Resources: Trainings & DMHAS Trainings

Moving On

- Programs are required to assess participants who have stabilized in housing for interest in moving-on.
- Participants have the option to decline.
- When participants are interested, programs provide moving-on assistance:
  - apply for other affordable housing
  - Locate another unit,
  - connect to alternative service providers
  - provide temporary supports during the transition

State of CT Moving On Policy Guide

Warning Letter

Prior to commencing termination , Housing Provider must notify participant in writing:

- Specific reason
- Instructions to contact Housing Provider immediately to discuss steps to remedy.
- Send by mail
- Copy case manager
- Maintain in chart

Enter into the chat something new that you learned today.

CHAT POLL

Additional Resources

Keep Current – Sign Up for CT BOS Emails

Email Lists

- [ ] General
- [x] HUD Grantees
- [x] SNOFO Providers
- [ ] Steering Committee
- [x] YHDP

- Self-Register on CT BOS homepage (www.ctbos.org)
- To receive important information about policies and processes that impact CT BOS funded projects select either HUD Grantees or YHDP
- Be sure new staff register

CT Balance of State Continuum of Care (CT BOS CoC) Onboarding Webinars

- Introduction to CT BOS CoC: 5/10/23
- Participant Eligibility Documentation: 2/28/23
- Housing Requirements Session #1: 5/16/23
- Housing Requirements Session #2: 5/23/23
- Fiscal Requirements Session #1: 6/6/23
- Fiscal Requirements Session #2: 6/13/23
- CoC Policies and Administrative Requirements
- DMHAS Training Catalog

Federal Requirements

CoC Program Interim Rule:

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2033/hearth-coc-program-interim-rule/

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, & Audit Requirements for Federal Awards:

https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200

HUD CoC Program Notices:

https://www.hudexchange.info/coc/coc-program-law-regulations-and-notices/#notices

Local Requirements

Available at www.ctbos.org:

- CT BOS Policies
- CT CAN Policies
- CT RRH Operations Guide
- PSH Requirements & Operations Guide
- CT BOS YHDP Requirements

CoC Monitoring Guide

- Includes criteria used during monitoring
- Cites regulations, notices, and policies
- Includes links to resources
- Available at: http://www.ctbos.org/resources

Case Management Resources

- CT BOS's Training Page
- CT BOS website – DMHAS Catalog page
- CCEH's Website: Resources page & more
- Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH's) Website
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH's) website

Other Resources

Available on the Resources Webpage:

- Eligibility Tools
- Participant Chart Monitoring Prep Guidance
- CT BOS Monitoring Links to Helpful resources

Available on the Trainings Webpage:

- Deep dives into a plethora of topics including:
  - Housing & Fiscal Requirements, Grievance Policy, Equity & Inclusion, and more

Final Questions & Suggestions?

Contact Info

Lauren Pareti
lpareti@housinginnovations.us

Shannon Quinn-Sheeran
shannon@housinginnovations.us