

## **Housing Services Standards of Care**

### **Definition:**

Support for Housing Services that involve the provision of short-term assistance to support emergency, temporary, or transitional housing to enable an individual or family to gain or maintain medical care.

### **Limitations:**

Funding cannot be made for care in a facility classified as an Institution for Mental Diseases under Medicaid.

Assistance cannot be a permanent solution. Duration limits must be set to provide transitional and emergency housing services using Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of 24 months are the standard.

Housing funds cannot be in the form of direct case payments to recipients for services of rent or mortgage payments.

### **Services:**

For all housing, regardless of whether or not the service includes some type of medical or supportive services, the client received assistance designed to help him/her obtain stable long-term housing, through a strategy to identify re-locate, and/or ensure the individual or family is moved to or capable of maintaining a stable long-term living situation. Eligible housing can include housing that does not provide direct medical or supportive services and housing that provides some type of medical or supportive services, such as residential mental health services, foster care, or assisted living residential services.

Housing services are essential for an individual or family to gain or maintain access and compliance with HIV-related medical care and treatment.

Housing assistance may be provided through:

- Short-term payments to vendors
- Establishment of voucher payment

Funds received under this category may be used for the following housing related expenditures:

- Housing referral services provided by a case manager or other professionals to include assessment, search, placement, and advocacy services, who possess a comprehensive knowledge of local, state, and federal housing programs and how these programs can be accessed.
- Emergency housing defined as an unforeseen event that jeopardizes a household’s ability to pay housing costs. Assistance is limited to one month of rental/mortgage/utility assistance within a contract year. The maximum amount of emergency assistance is \$600.
- Transitional housing defined support for a homeless person to facilitate movement to independent living within 4 months. Funds may be used for rent and/or application fees. Transitional assistance is limited to four continuous months of funding within a contract year. The maximum amount of assistance is \$2,400 per contract year.
- Short term assistance defined as support for a person currently in housing but needing financial support for rent and/or utilities to gain or maintain medical care. Assistance is limited to \$2,400 within a contract year.

### **Agency/Personnel /Staff Training**

<b>Staff Qualification</b>	<b>Expected Practice</b>
<b>Agency Policies and Procedures</b>	<p>The agency shall have policies/procedures for each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Client rights and responsibilities, including confidentiality guidelines</li> <li>-Client grievance policies and procedures</li> <li>-Client eligibility requirements to include financial eligibility determination for the region if applicable</li> <li>-Individualized written housing plan</li> <li>-Data collection procedures and forms, including data reporting</li> <li>-Guidelines for language accessibility</li> <li>-Mechanisms to allow newly identified client’s access to housing services.</li> <li>-Establish individualized written housing plan for transitional and short-term housing</li> </ul>

<p><b>Payment Methodology</b>  Payments are made either through a voucher program or payment made directly to the vendor per HRSA National Monitoring Standards.</p>	<p>Agency will establish payment methodology to include either direct payment to a housing vendor or a voucher system with no direct payments to clients. Payment process will include documentation of lease/mortgage, utility bill, fees (late fees, legal), utility bill, IRS Form W-9.</p>
<p><b>Agency Staff Qualifications</b></p>	<p>Staff providing housing services are either case managers or other professionals with a degree in health, human or education services and one year of experience with people living with HIV and/or persons with a history of mental illness, homelessness, or chemical dependence or individuals possessing equivalent experience and training. In addition, staff should possess comprehensive knowledge regarding housing programs.</p>
<p><b>Agency Staff Education</b></p>	<p>All professional housing providers must complete the following within three (3) months of hire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Effective Communication</li> <li>-Texas HIV Medication Program</li> <li>-HIV Case Management</li> <li>-HIV and Behavioral Risk</li> <li>-Substance Use and HIV</li> <li>-Mental Health and HIV</li> <li>-Local, state, and federal housing program rules and regulations</li> <li>-How to access housing programs</li> </ul> <p>Staff participating in the direct provision of services to clients must satisfactorily complete all appropriate continuing education units (CEUs) either based on license requirement or should obtain 12 hours of continuing education per year.</p> <p>Training documentation on file maintained in each personnel record.</p>

## Standards of Care

Standard	Measure
<p><b>Service Eligibility</b> According to the HRSA HIV National Monitoring Standards, eligibility for services must be determined.</p>	<p>Agency will receive referrals from a broad range of HIV/AIDS service providers.</p> <p>Eligibility information will be obtained from the referral source and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact and identifying information (name, address, phone, birth date, etc.)</li> <li>-Language(s) spoken</li> <li>-Literacy level (client self-report)</li> <li>-Demographics</li> <li>-Emergency contact</li> <li>-Household members</li> <li>-Pertinent releases of information</li> <li>-Documentation of insurance status</li> <li>-Documentation of income (including a “zero income” statement)</li> <li>-Documentation of state residency</li> <li>-Documentation of proof of HIV positivity</li> <li>-Photo ID or two other forms of identification</li> <li>-Acknowledgement of client’s rights</li> </ul> <p>Agencies should attempt to get all relevant eligibility information from the referral source before providing services to client.</p>
<p><b>Payer of Last Resort</b></p>	<p>Before assistance is provided there should be written documentation in the agency files that Ryan White/State Services funding is being used as the payer of last resort. Case managers or housing specialists should assist the client in assessing other sources for housing first, to include HOPWA.</p>
<p><b>Emergency Assistance</b></p>	<p>Agency staff will initiate an intake within three (3) business days onset of the emergency need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reason for need for emergency assistance that may place the client at risk of becoming homeless, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client is unable to pay rent due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recent job loss</li> <li>○ Unpaid medical leave of absence</li> <li>○ Exhausted all leave balances</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Client is unable to work due to recent hospitalization</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client had to recently purchase unexpected costly HIV medications or to pay for unexpected medical expenses out of pocket</li> </ul> <p>-Client was too ill to work and the client did not have a position where sick/annual leave was accrued</p> <p>-Client left employment and is waiting on disability benefits</p> <p>-Assessment that the household need is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual costs</li> <li>• Other resources are not reasonably available to address the unmet housing need</li> <li>• Payment will void eviction and result in at least temporary stability</li> </ul> <p>Supporting documentation of the need for emergency housing, payment documentation and Form W-9 must be located in the client primary record.</p> <p>All completed request for assistance will be approved or denied within three (3) working days of the request. If the housing provider determines that the situation is not an emergency and thus not eligible for housing assistance, the staff's supervisor must confirm this decision.</p> <p>Payment will be issued within three (3) – five (5) business days after approval.</p> <p>Staff will contact the client at the end of the month to determine if emergency situation has been resolved. If not resolved and needs additional assistance the client may be assessed for short-term housing assistance.</p>
<p><b>Comprehensive Housing Plan for Transitional (temporary) and Short-Term Housing</b></p>	<p>In addition to the above, agency staff will complete a brief housing need assessment within three (3) business days of identified need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Need for housing</li> <li>-Actual costs to avoid eviction</li> </ul> <p>Other resources not reasonably available to the address the unmet need</p> <p>All clients receiving assistance for transitional and/or short-term housing must have a Comprehensive Housing Plan. Plans should establish the on-going housing stability goals for</p>

	<p>clients in connection with their need to access medical treatment and supportive services associated with HIV/AIDS issues. The plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Short-term and long-term goals for alleviating risks of homelessness, establishing affordable permanent housing stability, and improving access to health care and supportive services</li> <li>-Identify the household's on-going housing stability needs, along with the reasons or causes of the housing need</li> <li>-Short-term and long-term action steps to address housing needs (strategy to identify, relocate, and/or ensure the individual or family is moved to, or capable of maintaining a long-term, stable living situation).</li> <li>-Identify available housing resources and supportive services for the client.</li> <li>-Address budget and money management issues if the cause for housing debt is related to the household's poor money management practices, such as the use of credit cards or cash for non-essential items or entertainment activities.</li> </ul> <p>Documentation that housing plan is being followed should include progress toward meeting goals located in the client's primary record/progress notes.</p> <p>Housing Plan should be reviewed with the client at least every month to see if progress is being met towards meeting goals.</p>
<p><b>Housing Referral Services</b></p>	<p>Housing related referrals provided by case managers or housing providers include housing assessment, search, placement, advocacy, and the fees associated with them.</p> <p>Staff will document in the client's primary record all activity to assist client in securing housing and outcome of the assistance.</p>
<p><b>Documentation in Client Record</b></p>	<p>The following will be documented in the client's primary record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All intake and eligibility documentation</li> <li>-Intake and Needs Assessment</li> <li>-Comprehensive Housing Plan</li> <li>-Housing services received, including referral services provided</li> </ul>

	<p>-Assistance provided to client to help them obtain stable long-term housing</p> <p>-Payer of last resort documentation</p> <p>-Mechanism for payment, such as rent paid directly to landlord, Form W-9</p>
<p><b>Documentation in Agency file</b></p>	<p>Client eligibility for services, actual services provided by type of service, number of clients served and level of services will be collected.</p> <p>Agency will keep track of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Number of clients served</li> <li>-Duration of housing services</li> <li>-Types of housing provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency</li> <li>• Transitional (temporary)</li> <li>• Short-term</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Number and type of housing referral services conducted</li> </ul>

## References

HRSA/HAB Division of Metropolitan HIV/AIDS Programs Program Monitoring Standards – Part A  
April 2013. p. 33-36.

HRSA/HAB Division of State HIV/AIDS Programs National Monitoring Standards – Program Part B  
April, 2013. p. 31-35.