



CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**HOMELESS SERVICES DIVISION**

**2018**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**New Rapid Re-Housing Project FY 2017 Continuum of Care  
Competitive Grant Program**

**Addendum\***

**FY 2018 Continuum of Care New Bonus Projects, Domestic  
Violence Bonus Projects, New Projects created from  
Reallocated Funding**

*\*Please note update and additional language.*

*Bidder's Conference – 11:30 am  
Thursday, July 26, 2018, at 1520 Market St. Room 4065 –  
Department of Human Services Large Conference Room*

Release Date: June 29, 2018  
Updated: July 20, 2018  
Due Date: August 10, 2018

## SECTION I: SUMMARY

<b>Funding</b>	FY 2017 and FY 2018 Continuum of Care (CoC)	
<b>RFP Title</b>	New Rapid Re-housing Project FY 2017 Continuum of Care Competitive Grant Program and Addendum: FY 2018 Continuum of Care New Bonus Projects, Domestic Violence Bonus Projects, New Projects created from Reallocated Funding	
<b>Deadline for Submission</b>	<b>5:00 p.m., August 10, 2018</b> Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.	
<b>Scope</b>	<b>This Request for Proposal is specifically for New Rapid Re-housing Project that is governed by CFR 756 Code of Federal Regulation</b>	
<b>Funds Available</b>	Reallocated FY 2017 CoC funds - Rapid Re-Housing (RRH): \$300,000 FY 2018 CoC Bonus Project – Rapid Re-Housing (RRH): \$778,982 FY 2018 CoC Domestic Violence Bonus RRH Project: \$1,298,304 Reallocated FY 2018 CoC funds: TBD	
<b>Application Guidelines</b>	<a href="https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/procurement/">https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/procurement/</a>	
<b>Submission Requirements</b>	All applicants must provide six (6) copies of their proposal at the time of submission (no staples) or one (1) electronic copy. Incomplete proposals may not be considered. The City of St. Louis reserves the right to reject and/or negotiate any and all proposals. Funding for these programs is subject to appropriations from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.	
<b>Direct Inquires To</b>	Donata Patrick Program Manager I Department of Human Services - Homeless Services Division 1520 Market Street, Room 4065 St. Louis, MO 63103 <a href="mailto:PatrickDo@stlouis-mo.gov">PatrickDo@stlouis-mo.gov</a>	
<b>RFP Calendar</b>	June 29, 2018	Original RFP Release
	July 20, 2018	Updated
	July 6, 2018	Original Bidder's Conference
	July 26, 2018	Updated Bidder's Conference
	August 3, 2018	Deadline to submit questions
	August 10, 2018	Application Deadline
	August 27, 2018	CoC Board Approval
	No later than August 30, 2018	PSA Committee Approval
August 31, 2018	Notification of Award	
December 1, 2018	Anticipated Contract Start Date for FY 2017	

CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
HOMELESS SERVICES DIVISION  
2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of St. Louis, Department of Human Services (DHS) is issuing Request for Proposals (RFP) for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) FY 2017 and FY 2018 Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The selection of the project is subject to the funding availability of HUD to the City of St. Louis. In keeping with HUD FY 2017 and FY 2018 CoC Program NOFA, the City of St. Louis is soliciting proposals consistent with the proposed project priorities by both HUD and our local Continuum of Care (CoC) with particular emphasis on reducing racial disparities within the homeless community and opportunities to build new capacity for Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing within St. Louis City.

New project applications submitted in response to this RFP will be evaluated by the Program Performance Committee under the process established by the City of St. Louis CoC. The ranking, review, and recommendations of new project proposals and the criteria employed by the CoC Program Performance Committee are included among the evaluation criteria used by the Professional Service Agreement (PSA) Committee hereunder.

CoC New Projects: The DHS Homeless Services Division, consistent with HUD's initiatives and the City of St. Louis' CoC needs, is seeking proposals for the following new programs:

- Reallocated FY 2017 CoC funds - **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** for individuals and/or families, including unaccompanied youth, who are residing on the streets or in emergency shelters, and who are fleeing domestic violence
- FY 2018 CoC Bonus Project – Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
- FY 2018 CoC Domestic Violence Bonus RRH Project
- Reallocated FY 2018 CoC funds

Beginning July 20, 2018, new and updated RFP packets will be available via pick-up at the Homeless Services Division (HSD) or at the following website: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/procurement/>

Questions may be referred **by email only** and must be submitted on or before **August 3, 2018**, to:

**Donata Patrick**  
**Program Manager I**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Homeless Services Division**  
**1520 Market Street, Room 4065**  
**St. Louis, MO 63103**  
[PatrickDo@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:PatrickDo@stlouis-mo.gov)

*Each question should begin by referencing the RFP page number and section to which it applies. DHS will record any questions and provide written responses that will be posted on the website.*

**Contact with Selection Committee members is strictly prohibited.**

**To be considered by the Selection Committee, New Projects must be returned to the above address or by email submission by 5:00 p.m. August 10, 2018.** All applicants should provide six (6) copies of their proposal at the time of submission or one (1) electronic copy. Please do not staple copies or supporting documentation. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time may be rejected. Incomplete proposals may be rejected.

The City of St. Louis reserves the right to reject and/or negotiate any and all proposals. Funding for these programs is subject to appropriations from federal agencies.

## **SECTION II: SUMMARY**

### **RAPID RE-HOUSING**

Funding is available for the following amounts:

Estimated \$300,000 in reallocated FY 2017

Up to \$778,982 in FY 2018 bonus

Reallocated FY 2018 funds (TBD)

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) assistance aims to help individuals or families who are homeless move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing through a combination of rental assistance and supportive services. Communities have demonstrated, and research has shown that RRH is a valuable strategy for quickly transitioning individuals and families directly from a shelter into permanent housing with needed supports. CoC RRH grant funds may be used to provide short and/or medium-term rental assistance and limited supportive services to help an individual or family that is homeless move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Supportive services can be provided up to 24 months. Supportive services may be provided up to 6 months after rental assistance has stopped.

#### **Supportive Services Costs**

Supportive services are eligible costs under the RRH program component. The CoC Program interim rule specifies all eligible services and clarifies that any cost not listed in the rule is ineligible. Services must be offered to residents of RRH for the full period of their residence.

Recipients and sub-recipients are required to perform a bi-annual assessment of the service needs of their program participants and to adjust services accordingly. Eligible costs include the cost of providing services, the salary and benefits of staff providing services, and materials and supplies used in providing services.

#### **Operating Costs**

Operating costs are eligible under the rapid re-housing program component. Funds may be used to pay the day-to-day operating costs in a single structure or individual housing units. Examples of eligible operating costs include maintenance (such as scheduled replacement of major systems), repair, building security (when CoC Program funds pay for more than 50 percent of the facility by unit or area), electricity, gas, water, furniture, equipment, property insurance, and taxes. These costs may not be combined with rental assistance costs within the same unit or structure.

#### **Rental Assistance**

Rental assistance is an eligible cost category under the tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) program component. Rental assistance may be short-term for up to 3 months; medium-term for 3 to 24 months; or long-term for more than 24 months. The length of assistance depends upon the component type under which the cost is funded. Recipients must serve as many program participants as identified in their funding application to HUD. However, if the amount reserved for the term of the grant exceeds the amount needed to pay actual costs, the excess funds may be used to cover property damage, rent increases, or the rental needs of a greater number of program participants. Rental assistance must be reasonable and, in the case of individual units, the rent paid may not exceed HUD-determined Fair Market Rents for 2018.

**TBRA.** Program participants select any appropriately sized unit within the CoC's geographic area, although recipients or sub-recipients may restrict the location under certain circumstances to ensure the availability of the appropriate supportive services. Except for victims of domestic violence, program participants may

not retain their rental assistance if they relocate to a unit outside the CoC's geographic area without prior written permission by the City of St. Louis and HUD.

### **Administration**

Administrative costs include expenses related to the overall administration of the grant such as management, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation activities and environmental review.

Administration funds are no more than 10% and shared equally with the applicant and the DHS.

### **Match Requirements**

Excluding leasing funds, the total value of CoC funds applied for must be matched with an amount equal to 25% of funds from cash or in-kind sources.

## **FY 2018 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) BONUS Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) PROJECT**

Funding available is up to \$1,298,304 through the Domestic Violence bonus funding.

The St. Louis City CoC seeks one or more qualified applicants to administer New DV\* Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) projects consistent with the guidance provided by HUD including, but not limited to, using a Housing First approach.

\* DV projects must be dedicated to survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that meet the definition of homeless, as defined in 24 CFR 578.3. Persons who are fleeing or attempting to flee human trafficking may also qualify under this homeless definition.

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. The project must be dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence who are defined as homeless by HUD. HUD guidance regarding persons experiencing domestic violence can be found here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/domestic-violence/>

2. Funds cannot be used to close a funding gap or replace lost funding in an existing housing project or service program. Project applicants must demonstrate that they are not replacing other funding sources.

3. Projects must be able to meet timeliness standards. The applicant is expected to initiate approved projects promptly in accordance with the requirements that are specified in the 2018 NOFA. Grant terms and associated grant operations may not extend beyond the availability of funds. Applicants must plan accordingly and only submit applications that can achieve project goals and outcomes within the specified grant term.

4. Applicants must meet HUD recipient and/or sub-recipient eligibility requirements.

5. Participation in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is required of all HUD grant recipients; however, victim service providers are required to use a comparable database to avoid disclosure of personally identifying data, per the requirements of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Victim service providers must collect all of the data elements required by HUD and provide only aggregate data about victims to the St. Louis City CoC.

6. Participation in the Coordinated Entry System is required, including filling units with referrals in accordance to the St. Louis Coordinated Entry Manual and prioritizing resources for the most vulnerable persons and households. More information on victim service providers participating in coordinated entry can be found here:

7. Projects must provide 25% match of eligible funds or in-kind services.

8. Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing projects must provide on-site supportive services or have an agreement in place for a partner agency to do so.

## **PROJECT TYPES**

**Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** - Provide permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who meet the definition of homeless. Program participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs. Eligible activities include: Leasing, Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Operations, and HMIS.

**Joint Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing (TH-RRH)** - Combines two existing program components in a single project to serve homeless individuals and families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. The project must demonstrate that program participants will move from transitional housing to permanent housing by one of the following: 1) a budget with twice as many resources for the RRH portion than the TH, 2) twice as many RRH units at a point in time as TH units, or 3) the budget and units are appropriate for the population being served by the project. Program participants may only receive up to 24-months of total assistance. The project plan should include supportive services and assistance to obtain mainstream benefits. Eligible activities include: Leasing, Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Operations, HMIS, and Project Administrative Costs.

**Supportive Services Only for Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE)** - Implement policies, procedures, and practices that equip the St. Louis City CoC's coordinated entry to better meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence and coordinate referrals between coordinated entry and the victim service providers. The system must be easily available/reachable for all persons within the CoC's geographic area and be accessible for persons with disabilities. There must be a strategy for advertising to reach homeless persons with the highest barriers. Eligible activities include: Supportive Services, HMIS, and Project Administrative Costs.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Preference may be given to applicants that are active members of the St. Louis City CoC. Active membership is determined by the member's attendance at general, committee, and board meetings. To be considered an active member, members must be in attendance at 50% of general meetings, 50% of at least one committee's meetings, and 50% of board meetings. *If you are not a member of the St. Louis City CoC and are awarded CoC funds, you must become a member prior to execution of the contract.***
- The applicant's ability to supplement/match the proposal from other funding sources. No other HUD funding, such as CoC, Emergency Solutions Grants, Supportive Housing Programs, Shelter Plus Care can be used as match.
- The applicant is a non-profit organization in good standing.
- The applicant's commitment to abide by housing first standards.
- The applicant's experience in providing similar services, the length and type of experience it has working with the homeless, the quality of programs/services it provides, and the experience level of key staff.
- The applicant's commitment to adhere to HUD and CoC priorities and processes, including (a) CoC Approved Coordinated Entry Manual, (b) CoC Program Best Practices, (c) CoC Performance Measures, and (d) CoC HMIS Manual. (See EXHIBIT B)
- The degree to which the project operates in accordance with the Rapid Re-housing Standards and is able to achieve the Performance Benchmarks outline in this RFP. (See EXHIBIT A)
- The applicant's commitment to being a good neighbor that protects the safety and the privacy of program participants and neighbors.
- The applicant's ability to adequately describe and address those requirements set out in the RFP.
- The applicant's commitment to, and participation in, the Coordinated Entry System developed by the CoC.
- The applicant's ability and commitment to fully participate in the City of St. Louis HMIS in accordance with CoC policies and procedures, and to report program performance and outcomes.
- The extent to which the proposed project fills a gap in the community's CoC and addresses a priority issue.
- The efforts of the applicant to address the needs of the homeless through community collaborations and partnerships.
- The ability to track clients through the progression of services being provided.
- The extent to which applicant leverages resources.
- The applicant's ability to provide solid fiscal accountability to the project.
- Past performances of programs and agencies previously funded by the DHS.
- The applicant's plans to involve and empower homeless populations to participate in decision-making and project operations.
- Availability of financial and operating resources as required to perform the work.
- The ability of the applicant to meet statutory, regulatory and ordinance requirements.
- The rank, review, and recommendations of each new project proposals, under criteria employed by the Program Performance Committee of the St. Louis City CoC.
- M/WBE (Minority and/or Woman-Owned Business Enterprise) and/or DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) participation. (See EXHIBIT B)

**City of St. Louis**

**2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)  
Application**

1. Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of Program: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Program Address: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Contact Person & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **SELECT ONLY ONE CATEGORY.** An agency may request funds from multiple funding sources and from multiple categories. The agency **MUST** complete a separate application for each category. To select a category, double-click on the box **and** under the default value select “checked.”

**FY 2017 and FY 2018 Continuum of Care (CoC): NEW PROJECTS ONLY**

- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) - (bonus and/or reallocated)
- Bonus Domestic Violence RRH Project

**7. Target Population(s):**

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Men      | <input type="checkbox"/> Women w/ children        | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Women    | <input type="checkbox"/> Battered Spouse          | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Physical Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Dependent        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families        | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Dependent        |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with HIV/AIDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage Mothers | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronically Mentally Ill | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                 |

**8. Housing:**

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barracks          | <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered Site Apartments | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Room Occupancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Detached House |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group/Large House |  | <input type="checkbox"/> On-site Apartments    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other          |

9. Requested CoC amount reflects: \_\_\_\_\_% of the program/project budget of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Requested amount reflects: \_\_\_\_\_% of the total agency’s budget of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Is this program/project currently in existence?  Yes How many years? \_\_\_\_\_  No

Annual amounts of funds received from other City Department/Agencies?

<u>Name of Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$



**ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE INCLUDED TO ENSURE CONSIDERATION FOR FUNDING**

All proposals submitted to the Department of Human Services must include the following items:

<p><b><u>Project Proposal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narrative</li><li>• Client Population</li><li>• Organizational Capacity and Experience</li><li>• Service Plan</li><li>• Participant Tracking &amp; Reporting</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Attachments (no page limit):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence of 501 (c) 3 status</li><li>• Copy of System for Award Management (SAM) Report</li><li>• Organizational Chart</li><li>• Current List of the Board of Directors</li><li>• Federal Form 990</li><li>• Job Descriptions &amp; Personnel Resumes</li><li>• Detailed Project Budget</li><li>• Agency Budget</li><li>• HMIS Participation Letter</li><li>• In the event of a new homeless service agency, a letter of support from the relevant Alderperson</li></ul>
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**Narrative:**

The narrative provides an overview of the proposed project. It provides sufficient information to understand the scope of the project, the clients to be served, the cost of the proposed activities, and the System Performance Targets and Priorities that have been adopted by the St. Louis CoC.

**Client Population:**

The proposal should clearly identify and describe the characteristics and needs of the clients to be served by the project.

**Organizational Capacity and Experience:**

The applicant should demonstrate a history of providing services to low-income individuals who are homeless, formerly homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. The applicant should provide outcomes data from similar programs operated by the organization that show the impact of the services provided. The applicant should describe already established relationships with other organizations in the community to show that the agency works with a broad network of providers to provide wrap-around services to meet the needs of participants. The applicant should demonstrate the fiscal capacity to manage the project within the proposed budget.

**Service Plan:**

The applicant should show how the project will operate in accordance with the **Rapid Re-housing Standards** and how it will achieve the **Performance Benchmarks** outlined in this RFP (see EXHIBIT A). The applicant should show how it will interact with the Coordinated Entry System and serve the priority populations established by the St. Louis City CoC. The applicant must provide a detailed plan of service delivery for each program participant. The service plan should include services that meet the ability and needs of the participants. It should include housing focused case management that matches client’s needs, tracks client’s progress, and maintains program data for reporting. The applicant should explain how services will be identified, how individual plans will be developed and implemented, and how case management will assist clients in accessing housing.

**Participant Tracking and Reporting:**

The applicant should describe how the project will fully utilize the City of St. Louis HMIS, Service Point or comparable database, and will provide data to: track participants through the progression of services being provided and referrals to mainstream resources, assess individual progress toward personal goals, evaluate the effectiveness of the services delivered and of the project toward achieving programs goals, report data on client characteristics, use of services, and expenditures to the funding agency.

**Job Descriptions/ Resume:**

Job descriptions are required for positions for which an applicant is requesting funding. All applicants must include the resume of key personnel (Executive Director, Program Director, Case Manager, etc.).

**Detailed Budget**

The budget should be explained and justified in the proposal. Costs should be reasonable for the services provided and the number of persons to be served. The services budgeted should reflect the needs of clients. New CoC Project budgets should be one (1) year budgets.

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Rapid Re-Housing Performance Benchmarks and Standards**

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community, and not become homeless again in the near term. The core components of a rapid re-housing program are housing identification, move-in and rent assistance, and rapid re-housing case management and services. These core components represent the minimum that a program must provide to households to be considered a rapid re-housing program.

This Request For Proposal (RFP) provide Respondents with the benchmarks that would be used to determine the potential program effectiveness in achieving the desired program outcomes. These benchmarks are accompanied by qualitative program standards for each of the rapid re-housing core components that are likely to help a program meet the performance benchmarks. Lastly, this RFP include a section on program philosophy and design standards that provide guidance on the broader role the rapid re-housing program should play in ending homelessness in the City of St. Louis.

The benchmarks and standards outlined in this RFP are based on what is currently considered promising practice by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), Abt Associates and other federal technical assistance providers, and nationally recognized, high-performing rapid re-housing providers. These benchmarks and standards are intended to provide guidance on rapid re-housing program design that will likely lead to success in ending homelessness for individuals and families through the use of the three core components of rapid re-housing.

### **Performance Benchmarks**

Ultimately the effectiveness of a rapid re-housing program is determined based on the program's ability to accomplish the model's three primary goals:

1. Reduce the length of time program participants spend homeless
2. Exit households to permanent housing
3. Limit returns to homelessness within a year of program exit

When evaluating a program's ability to meet these benchmarks, it is important to remember that rapid re-housing is a Housing First intervention, meaning, among other things, that programs should not screen out households based on criteria that are assumed to predict successful outcomes, such as income, employment, criminal history, mental health history, medical history, or evidence of "motivation."

The benchmarks detailed below are based on performance data of programs that do not screen out households on the basis of the above barriers. Programs assisting individuals and families with high housing barriers are able to achieve these outcomes. It should also be noted that one of the program standards is that the program does not screen out households on the basis of the above barriers. Thus, a program that met the performance benchmark would still not meet the accompanying program standards if it screened out households with probable low successful outcomes. It may be necessary for rapid re-housing programs to partner with homelessness-prevention providers to serve high barrier households after placement. It is a possibility that some rapid re-housing households will need periodic support to avoid a return to homelessness.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will use the performance benchmarks for program evaluation and for the purpose of comparison between programs, to gain clarity of how the proposed program will serve households with zero income and/or higher housing barriers. The performance benchmarks also provide a baseline from which DHS will establish performance improvement goals and performance-based contracting standards.

New rapid re-housing programs will not have sufficient data to meet all of the performance benchmarks, but these programs can meet the accompanying program standards, which are intended to design programs that do achieve the benchmarks and are detailed later in this document. Additionally, in the first several months of operations, providers may need time to bring operations to scale and reach full capacity.

### **Performance Benchmark #1: Reduce the Length of Time Program Participants Spend Homeless**

The first goal of rapid re-housing is to reduce the length of time individuals and families spend homeless by identifying and helping households access appropriate housing options. Activities that contribute to good performance on this outcome are recruiting landlords to have access to units, finding units that are in the communities and neighborhoods that program participants want to live in, and negotiating with landlords to help program participants access housing.

**For the program to meet this performance benchmark, households served by the program should move into permanent housing in an average of 30 days or less.** This measure is the average length of time between the date when an individual or family is identified as having entered a rapid re-housing program (HMIS rapid re-housing program entry date) to when they move into permanent housing (HMIS residential move-in date). This measure is only calculated for those households that move into a permanent housing destination and does not include those who have not yet moved in or move into a non-permanent housing destination. The permanent housing may include private, unsubsidized housing; subsidized housing; permanent supportive housing; or housing shared with friends or family in a sustainable living situation (one **that should not** be categorized as “temporary”). Permanent housing does not include shelter, a transitional housing program, jail or prison, or a treatment facility.

### **Performance Benchmark #2: Permanent Housing Success Rates**

The second goal of a rapid re-housing program is to exit households to permanent housing in the community with or without a subsidy. A rapid re-housing program can impact permanent housing success through the combination of an appropriate housing placement, financial assistance, and effective case management and services.

**For a program to meet this performance benchmark, at least 80 percent of households that exit a rapid re-housing program should exit to permanent housing.** This measure is calculated by taking the number of households who were in the permanent housing when they exited the rapid re-housing program (HMIS rapid re-housing program exit date and destination at exit) and dividing by all of the households who exited the rapid re-housing program regardless of destination over the same period of time. This figure will be calculated for households exiting the rapid re-housing program over the preceding 12 month period. The permanent housing may include private, unsubsidized housing; subsidized housing; permanent supportive housing; or housing shared with friends or family in a sustainable living situation (one that should not be categorized as “temporary”). Permanent housing does not include shelter, a transitional housing program, jail or prison, or a treatment.

The rapid re-housing program may not meet this benchmark, particularly if programs are primarily serving households with zero income and/or higher housing barriers. The CoC may set alternate performance goals for the purposes of comparison between programs or performance improvement while programs work to achieve these benchmarks.

### **Performance Benchmark #3: Returns to Homelessness**

The third goal of the rapid re-housing program is to reduce the number of households returning to homelessness following soon after an exit from a rapid re-housing program. The primary opportunities for a rapid re-housing program to impact the success of a household in remaining housed are 1. securing appropriate housing, and 2. effective case management and services.

**For a program to meet this performance benchmark, at least 85 percent of households that exit a rapid re-housing program to permanent housing should remain housed for at least one year after exit.** This benchmark will be measured by examining HMIS data from homeless programs across the entire CoC to determine whether

people who successfully exited from the rapid re-housing program to permanent housing returned to homelessness, meaning an unsheltered location, emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a Safe Haven, within 12 months of exiting.

A rapid re-housing program in a community without open HMIS coverage (at least 80 percent of programs entering data), and for a rapid re-housing provider who is also a domestic violence provider, this measure can be calculated using an alternative, equivalent method to document the program's ability to meet the standards such as follow up with a representative sample of households that exit to permanent housing. This measure of returns to homelessness tracks the percentage of households who do not experience a subsequent episode of homelessness. If a household receives some type of emergency or permanent housing assistance but does not experience another episode of homeless, then they will be considered a household that did not return to homelessness for the purpose of this performance benchmark. If a household moves from one permanent housing situation to another permanent housing situation or doubled up situation without another episode of homelessness between moves, it is also considered a household that did not return to homelessness for the purpose of this measure.

A rapid re-housing program that primarily serves households with zero income and/or higher housing barriers will not meet this benchmark. The Department of Human Services may set alternate performance goals for the purposes of comparison between programs or performance improvement while programs work to achieve these benchmarks.

### **Core Component Program Standards**

The core components for rapid re-housing were developed in collaboration with and endorsed by, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). While a household that is rapidly rehoused is not required to utilize all three core components, in order to meet the program standards in this RFP, the rapid re-housing program must offer program participants all three core components: housing identification, move-in and rent assistance, and rapid re-housing case management and services. The core components can be provided by a single agency or in partnership with other agencies and still meet these program standards.

Program standards are detailed below for each of the three core components. These standards are accompanied by principles and a rationale on which the standards are based as well as examples of how a program may meet those standards.

#### **Housing Identification**

The goal of Housing Identification is to find housing for program participants quickly. Activities under this core component include recruiting landlords with units in the communities and neighborhoods where program participants want to live and negotiating with landlords to help program participants access housing.

##### **Principles**

- Within the limits of the participant's income, a rapid re-housing program should have the ability to help households access units that are desirable and sustainable—those that are in neighborhoods they want to live in, have access to transportation, are close to employment, and are safe.
- Housing identification efforts should be designed and implemented to actively recruit and retain landlords and housing managers willing to rent to program participants who may otherwise fail to pass typical tenant screening criteria.
- Critical to the formation of landlord-program relationship is the recognition of the landlord as a vital partner. The rapid re-housing provider must be responsive to landlords to preserve and develop those partnerships for the purposes of future housing placements.

## **Rationale**

Landlord recruitment and support is essential for program participants to have rapid access to permanent housing from the moment they enter the program. Building and sustaining partnerships with landlords affords more opportunities for program participants to rapidly obtain permanent housing. As landlords experience the benefits of the partnership with rapid re-housing programs, they may give preference to program participants or even be willing to occasionally consider some reduction in rent or a late payment allowance.

Without landlord screening concessions, many program participants would be denied housing opportunities due to their income, housing, credit and/or criminal histories. Landlords are often willing to waive some or all screening requirements because the program staff will advocate and communicate with the landlord and tenant and resolve tenancy problems as soon as possible, if and when they arise. Some programs also promise limited vacancy periods between tenants or double security deposits to persuade landlords to rent to tenants who appear to be higher risk.

At the same time, the program must also be knowledgeable about landlord responsibilities to protect households served by the program. Programs should not knowingly place households with negligent landlords and should assist households in understanding tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities. Beyond landlord recruitment, programs must also match households to appropriate housing (housing for which they will be able to pay the rent after financial assistance ends) that is decent and safe, including meeting the particular safety needs of survivors of domestic violence. An effective rapid re-housing program accomplishes this by providing a variety of housing options in a variety of neighborhoods and by serving as a resource to households during the housing search, location, and application processes.

## **Housing Identification Program Standards**

### ***Program Staffing***

1. The program designates staff whose responsibility is to identify and recruit landlords and encourage them to rent to homeless households served by the program. The staff has the knowledge, skills, and agency resources to understand landlords' perspectives, landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, and negotiate landlord supports. The program may have dedicated staff for whom this is the primary responsibility. If the program does not have a dedicated staff person(s) perform this function, case manager job descriptions must include responsibilities of landlord recruitment and negotiation. Some of the program's case managers must be trained in this specialized skill set to perform the recruitment function effectively.
2. Staff is trained on housing identification, landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, the wider array of housing assistance available within a community, and other core competencies. The program has a systematic way of onboarding new staff and keeping staff regularly updated on new strategies, policies, and housing assistance options within the community.

### ***Program Policies***

3. The program has written policies and procedures for landlord recruitment activities, including screening out potential landlord partners who have a history of poor compliance with their legal responsibilities and fair housing practices.
4. The program offers a standard, basic level of support to all landlords who lease to program participants. This support is detailed in a written policy distributed to landlords. The program

can negotiate additional supports, as needed, on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum, this policy specifies that program staff:

- a. Respond quickly (within one business day) to landlord calls about serious tenancy problems
  - b. Seek to resolve conflicts around lease requirements, complaints by other tenants, and timely rent payments
  - c. Whenever possible, negotiate move-out terms and assist program participants to quickly locate and move into another unit without an eviction
5. The program has a detailed policy for the type of assistance provided to help households find and secure housing. Staff explain and distribute this policy to households at the entry to the program. Some households may decline assistance in finding housing, but the program checks on their progress and offers advice and/or direct assistance if they encounter obstacles they cannot resolve independently. The program has a written policy requiring staff to explain to participants basic landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities and the requirements of their specific lease.

### ***Program Activities***

6. The program continually engages in the recruitment and retention of landlord partners and has methods of tracking landlord partners and unit vacancies, unit locations, characteristics, and costs.
7. The program provides participants with multiple housing choices within practical constraints. The onus is on the program to provide these housing choices, but this does not preclude program participants from conducting their own search and choosing housing they identify independently.
8. Program assists participants in making informed housing choices with the goal that participants will be able to maintain housing after program exit, even when participants experience high housing cost burdens. While participants ultimately chose their housing unit, a program uses housing and budgeting plans that help participants understand the likelihood of being able to pay rent and meet the requirements of the lease by the end of assistance. For extremely low-income households, there should be reasonable projections and expectations and due diligence on the program's part to help participants secure income (through employment, public benefits, and/or on-going rental assistance) at program exit.
9. When closing a case, the program provides information to landlords about how they can contact the program again if needed and what kind of follow-up assistance may be available.

### **Examples of Meeting Program Standards: Housing Identification**

Programs that meet the above standards include those that:

- Employ "Housing Location" staff who have experience working with, and negotiating leases with, local landlords.
- Recruit landlords through word of mouth; cold outreach to posted ads; driving around prospective neighborhoods looking for FOR RENT signs; soliciting references from partners; Craigslist and other websites, other media; presentations at local service clubs, religious organizations, and landlord associations; and/or collaborative approaches with local elected officials and government agencies.
- Provide contact information to landlords to reach appropriate staff, respond to landlord calls within one business day, mediate disputes between program participants and landlords, pay for damage caused to units, and assure rental payments are made on time.

- Contact local tenant rights organizations to identify landlords who fail to comply with licensing/building requirements or correct violations, and review housing court records. Survey program participants about their satisfaction with landlords to identify patterns in landlord behavior that would suggest they should not be program partners.
- Be familiar with the screening information landlords collect to identify prospective tenants. This information can help match program participants with landlords and units.

## **Move-In and Rent Assistance**

The goal of Move-In and Rent Assistance is to provide short-term assistance to households to pay for housing. Activities under this core component include paying for security deposits, move-in expenses, rent, and utility deposits.

### **Principles**

- Move-in and rent assistance should be flexible and tailored to the varying and changing needs of a household while providing the assistance necessary for households to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing.
- The rapid re-housing program should make efforts to maximize the number of households it is able to serve by providing households with financial assistance in a progressive manner, providing only the assistance necessary to stabilize in permanent housing.

### **Rationale**

The intent of the move-in and rent assistance component of rapid re-housing is to enable quick resolution of the immediate housing crisis. The majority of rapid re-housing participants will be able to maintain housing with short-term rent assistance. Programs should start out by assuming households, even those with zero income or other barriers, will succeed with a minimal subsidy and support rather than a long subsidy, and extend the subsidy if/when necessary. Households with higher housing barriers or no income may need assistance for different depths or durations, but such households should still be assisted in immediately attaining permanent housing, and the large majority will still successfully exit to permanent housing.

The program should be attentive to the ability of a household to maintain housing once the subsidy ends, but should not be entirely constrained by attempts to reach a rent burden of only 30 percent of a participant's income—a standard that is not achieved by the majority of low-income and poor households. Instead, they should recognize that once housed; the rapid re-housing households will be much better positioned to increase their incomes and address other needs.

By not over-serving households, programs can maximize the impact of available resources to serve the largest number of people possible. The flexible nature of the rapid re-housing program model enables agencies to be responsive to the varied and changing needs of program participants and the community as a whole.

## **Move-In and Rent Assistance Program Standards**

### ***Program Staff***

1. Program staff are trained on regulatory requirements of all rapid re-housing funding streams and on the ethical use and application of a program's financial assistance policies, including, but not limited to, initial and ongoing eligibility criteria, program requirements, and assistance maximums. The program has a systematic way of onboarding new staff and keeping staff regularly updated on changing regulations and/or program policies.

### ***Program Policies***

2. The program has clearly defined policies and procedures for determining the amount of financial assistance provided to a participant, as well as defined and objective standards for when case management and financial assistance should continue and end. Guidelines are flexible enough to respond to the varied and changing needs of program participants, including participants with zero income.
3. If participants are expected to pay an amount toward their housing, the program has written policy and procedures for determining that amount. The amount must be reasonable for their income (this could be up to 50-60 percent of income), including \$0 for those with no current income.
4. A progressive approach is used to determine the duration and amount of rent assistance. Financial assistance is not a standard “package” and is flexible enough to adjust to households’ unique needs and resources, especially as participants’ financial circumstances or housing costs change. Policies detailing this progressive approach include clear and fair decision guidelines and processes for reassessment for the continuation and amount of financial assistance. Policies and procedures also detail when and how rapid re-housing assistance is used as a bridge to a permanent subsidy or permanent supportive housing placement.

### ***Program Activities***

5. The program provides when needed—either directly or through a formal agreement with another organization or agency—financial assistance for housing costs, which may include rental deposits, first month’s rent, last month’s rent, temporary rental assistance, and/or utility deposits.
6. The program issues checks quickly and on time and has the capacity to track payments to landlords and other vendors.
7. The program has the capacity to pay rent and utilities in accordance with federal regulation regarding rental assistance that directly prevent a participant from being able to sign a lease.
8. The program assists participants with meeting basic needs at move-in, such as securing basic furnishings for an apartment, including mattresses and basic kitchen items such as a pot for cooking and utensils.
9. The transition of financial assistance is coordinated with case management efforts to assist program participants to assume and sustain their housing costs.

### **Examples of Meeting Program Standards: Move-In and Rent Assistance**

Programs that meet the above standards include those that:

- Utilize income-based, shallow and/or deep subsidy structures that expect clients with income to contribute toward their rent and other costs, and that move as quickly as appropriate to reduce or end subsidies.
- Provide policies and procedures to program participants that indicate assistance is determined based on individualized housing plans/case plans/participant goals and needs and also makes clear any limits to financial assistance required by the Department of Human Services or established by the program.
- Have established processes for approval, review, and modification of types/levels of financial assistance.
- Have policies that inform participants of the program’s short-term duration, and practices that encourage participants’ independence and capability of sustaining their housing, and that reduce reliance on the program.



- Have policies that reduce or end subsidies whenever appropriate, leaving open the possibility that a household may return for more assistance, rather than continuing support.

## **Rapid Re-housing Case Management and Services**

The goals of Rapid Re-housing Case Management and Services are to help participants obtain and move into permanent housing, support participants to stabilize in housing, and connect them to the community and mainstream services and supports if needed.

### **Obtain and Move into Permanent Housing**

The initial focus of rapid re-housing case management is on assisting a participant to obtain and move into a new housing unit. Case managers should help participants resolve or mitigate tenant screening barriers like rental and utility deposits or multiple evictions; obtain necessary identification if needed; support other move-in activities such as obtaining furniture; and prepare participants for successful tenancy by reviewing lease provisions.

### **Support Stabilization in Housing**

After moving in, rapid re-housing case management should be home-based and help participants stabilize within housing. Based upon their needs and requests, it should help them identify and access supports including family and friend networks; mainstream and community services; and employment and income. Case managers should resolve issues or conflicts that may lead to tenancy problems, such as disputes with landlords or neighbors, while also helping participants develop and test skills they will use to retain housing once they are no longer in the program.

### **Close the Case**

Rapid re-housing assistance should end, and the case should be closed when the participant is no longer imminently at risk of homelessness. If appropriate, or if requested by the participant, case management may continue after financial assistance ends. For those that will require ongoing support after exiting the rapid re-housing program, case managers should provide participants with warm handoffs to mainstream and community-based services that will continue to assist them.

### **Principles**

- Rapid re-housing case management should be client-driven. Client-driven case management is voluntary for the participant and based on what the participant wants from the program and services, rather than on what the case manager decides the participant needs. Participants should be the primary decision-makers in goal setting, planning, and interventions.
- Rapid re-housing case management should be flexible—offering only essential assistance until the participant demonstrates the need for or requests additional help. The intensity and duration of case management are based on the needs of individual households and may lessen or increase over time.
- Rapid re-housing case management uses a strengths-based approach to empower clients. Case managers identify the inherent strengths of a person or family instead of diagnoses or deficits, then build on those strengths to empower the household to succeed.
- Rapid re-housing program case management reflects the short-term nature of the rapid rehousing assistance. It focuses on housing retention and helping a household build a support network outside of the program. It connects the participant with community resources and service options, such as legal services, healthcare, vocational assistance, transportation, child

care, and other forms of assistance, that continue beyond participation in the rapid re-housing program.

### **Rationale**

Rapid re-housing is a short-term crisis intervention. The intent of rapid re-housing case management is not to build a long-term services relationship, but instead to assist a household in accessing and stabilizing in a housing unit. Case management focuses on navigating barriers to tenancy and helping participants build a support system. By identifying and connecting them with community supports, including services and mainstream resources as well as family and friend networks, to work through issues that may have contributed to their original housing instability. The program should not initially assume all participants need multiple services but wait until a need is demonstrated or expressed by the participant. Staff should be able to increase supports as needed to assist program participants. In instances when a household's situation is more complex, and the household needs longer-term supports to retain their housing, the program must be able to connect households to community and mainstream services to enable longer-term assistance.

### **Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services Program Standards**

#### ***Program Staff***

1. Case manager job descriptions direct case managers to focus on housing and to use strengths-based practices focused on participant engagement and meeting the unique needs of each household.
2. In programs that have specialized staff who conducts housing location, the case managers work closely with housing locator staff to match the client to an appropriate unit as quickly as possible.
3. Case managers are trained in rapid re-housing case management strategies and related evidence-based practices as well as program policies and community resources. Additionally, a program has a systematic process for onboarding new staff and regularly updating the training of current staff.

#### ***Program Policies***

4. Program participants direct when, where, and how often case management meetings occur. Meetings occur in a participant's home and/or in a location of the participant's choosing whenever possible.
5. Case managers respect a program participant's home and personal property, schedule appointments ahead of time, entering only when invited in, and respecting the program participant's personal property and wishes while in their home.
6. When case management and service compliance is not mandated by federal or state regulation, services offered by a program have voluntary participation.
7. The program has clear safety procedures for home visits that staff has been trained on. The procedures are posted clearly within the office space, shared with program participants at intake, and shared with participants and staff whenever changes are made.
8. The program has clearly defined relationships with employment and income programs that it can connect program participants to when appropriate.
9. The program has clearly defined policies and objective standards for when case management should continue and end. These guidelines are flexible enough to respond to the varied and changing needs of program participants. In instances where cases are continued outside of these defined policies and objective standards, there is a review and approval process.

### ***Program Activities***

Program activities for rapid re-housing case management are grouped into categories that will contribute to the specific goals of rapid re-housing case management. The program activities listed here are not exclusively provided in a linear progression and can be administered in whatever order and intensity is most appropriate for a participant.

### ***Obtain and Move into Permanent Housing***

10. At enrollment or within 72 hours of enrollment, the program conducts a tenancy barriers assessment— not for the purpose of screening out a participant, but to quickly address barriers, help direct and navigate the housing search and contribute to landlord negotiation efforts. Any other assessments completed prior to housing are limited and focus on those things necessary to support health and safety and to resolve the housing crisis as quickly as possible.
11. The program should have non-HUD resources and/or be able to connect participants to community resources that help participants: resolve or navigate tenant problems (like rental and utility arrears or multiple evictions) that landlords may screen for on rental applications; obtain necessary documentation such as identification; prepare participants for successful tenancy by reviewing lease provisions; and support other move-in activities such as providing furniture.
12. The programs should offer basic tenancy skills learning opportunities, which can include instruction or guidance on basic landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, requirements and prohibitions of a lease, and meeting minimum expectations for care of the housing unit, such as not causing damage.

### ***Support Stabilization in Housing***

13. Program staff works directly with the participant and landlord to resolve tenancy issues without threatening the participant's tenancy. The issue might be a failure to pay rent, not properly maintaining the unit, or disturbing other tenants. It also may include a landlord not meeting his/her obligations. The program works quickly to identify a corrective course of action and, without breaking a participant's confidentiality, keeps the landlord and participant informed about the program's action to mitigate the situation.
14. When appropriate, case managers work with participants to build their communication skills to better respond to or negotiate with a landlord. This might relate to repairs; an extension on a rent payment; or complaints against the tenant concerning noise, odors, trash, or the behavior of children or guests.
15. When necessary, case managers help participants avoid evictions before they happen, and maintain a positive relationship with the landlord. This can be done by moving a household into a different unit prior to eviction and possibly identifying a new tenant household for the landlord's unit.
16. Housing plans, sometimes known as case plans or goal plans, focus on how program participants can maintain a lease and address barriers to housing retention, including maximizing their ability to pay rent; improving understanding of landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities; and addressing other issues that have, in the past, resulted in housing crisis or housing loss. Plans account for participant preferences/choices and include only goals created with, and agreed to by, the participant.
17. The program, at a minimum, maintains a list of community resources (and their eligibility requirements) to which participants can be referred. Preferably, the program has

relationships with these agencies. The list is regularly updated and includes other low-income housing assistance programs.

18. Case managers make referrals to appropriate community and mainstream resources, including, but not limited to, income supplements/benefits (TANF, Food Stamps/SNAP, etc.), non-cash supports (healthcare, food supports, etc.), legal assistance, credit counseling, and subsidized childcare. When making these referrals, it is the case manager's responsibility to follow-up on receipt of assistance. However, a participant may choose not to follow up on or participate in any referred services or programs.
19. As rapid re-housing assistance is short-term, case managers pay particular attention to participants' incomes moving forward. Though income is not a requirement at the beginning of a program, case managers help participants review their budgets, including income and spending, to make decisions about reducing expenses and increasing income. Options include benefit enrollment and increasing employment and earnings over time.
20. Case managers work with participants to identify pathways for increasing earned income, including participating in mainstream and community employment support programs as well as using a program's own employer connections.
21. If necessary, participants are assisted in identifying existing familial and personal connections that can help them maintain housing by providing supports such as child care, transportation, etc. Participants may choose not to engage in this process.

#### ***Close the Case***

22. When closing a case, case managers are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate referrals have been made and information on available community assistance has been shared with a participant.
23. When a referral to on-going support is made while a case is open or in the process of closing, case managers provide a "warm handoff" and follow up, to assure that assistance is satisfactory.
24. When closing a case, case managers provide information to participants about how they can access assistance from the program again if needed and what kind of follow-up assistance may be available. In instances when a participant is at imminent risk of returning to homelessness, the program has the capacity to either directly intervene or provide a referral to another prevention resource.

#### **Examples of Meeting Program Standards: Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services**

The program that meets the above standards includes those that:

- Have job descriptions for case managers that include requirements that they focus activities on obtaining housing and housing stabilization and conduct case management in participants' homes and other locations outside the office and that they have the ability to get to and from those meetings.
- Have case/housing plan templates that limit the number of goals and action steps to be included in a single plan, and focus attention on housing and income-related goals.
- Have a case review process to help staff problem-solve around case/housing plans.
- Make use of a "Support Network Map" that helps participants identify people already in their lives who can help with specific things, such as transportation or childcare.
- Offer budgeting assistance when desired by participants.
- Train staff to coach participants in conflict avoidance or de-escalation, adequate care of the housing unit, lease compliance, etc.

- Collect, maintain, and update records of available mainstream and community resources for program participants. This includes community resources that can reduce burdens on income, including employment opportunities, food banks, clothing consignment stores, low-income utility programs, and others.

## **Program Philosophy and Design**

Beyond ending homelessness for individual households, rapid re-housing plays a key role in ending homelessness overall. To do so effectively and efficiently, a program must coordinate with the broader homeless system, not screen out large portions of the homeless population, and have a commitment to a Housing First approach.

### **Principles**

- In order to identify, engage, and assist as many households experiencing homelessness as possible, a program should coordinate and fully participate in the broader homeless assistance system.
- Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed for, and flexible enough to serve, anyone not able to exit homelessness on their own.
- Rapid re-housing programs should not attempt to screen out households based on a score on an assessment tool or criteria that are assumed, but not shown, to predict successful outcomes, such as a minimum income threshold, employment, absence of a criminal history, evidence of “motivation,” etc.
- Rapid re-housing participants should have all the rights and responsibilities of typical tenants and should sign a standard lease agreement.

### **Rationale**

Rapid re-housing is a Housing First intervention meaning that the primary focus is moving households into housing quickly without preconditions. As such, programs should maximize the number of households they can serve by coordinating with the CoC coordinated entry system and outreach efforts and by not screening out households. Additionally, the primary focus of assessments and assistance should be on resolving the current housing crisis. This means a focus on the circumstances of the crisis, the household’s barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, and the reasons they are unable to solve their housing crisis without the program’s help.

National data show that rapid re-housing allows a very high percentage of homeless households with the highest barriers to secure permanent housing and not re-enter homelessness. Studies have not found any factors that reliably predict rapid re-housing program participants’ success or failure in maintaining permanent housing after the subsidy has ended. Therefore, assessing for assumed client success in maintaining permanent housing should not be a part of pre-intake screening or admission to the rapid re-housing program.

Despite its widespread effectiveness, not all individuals or families will be successful in a shorter-term intervention like rapid re-housing. With that in mind, programs should have strong connections to mainstream housing programs and other service providers that can support households for whom the rapid re-housing intervention is not enough. Everything possible should be done to ensure that those served by rapid rehousing do not become homeless again.

### **Program Philosophy and Design Standards**

#### ***Program Staff***

1. The program staff must be trained on the principles of Housing First and oriented to the basic program philosophy of rapid re-housing. The program should have a systematic way of onboarding new staff that includes training on Housing First and rapid re-housing principles.
2. The program should use the standards included in this document (or other similar standards) as the basis for training and supervising staff.

### ***Program Policies***

3. Program has well-defined and written screening processes that use consistent and transparent decision criteria. Criteria do not include screening possible participants out for income or lack thereof.
4. Eligibility criteria for the program do not include a period of sobriety, a commitment to participation in treatment, or any other criteria designed to “predict” long-term housing stability other than a willingness to engage the program and work on a self-directed housing plan.
5. If the coordinated entry does not prioritize referrals, the program has clearly-defined and written criteria and procedures that enable it to prioritize applicants, particularly where the volume of requests for assistance from eligible households exceeds program resources. Prioritized households are those least likely to exit homelessness without assistance—not the households considered most likely to succeed in rapid re-housing, regardless of any scores on assessment tools or lack of income.
6. Disabilities are only assessed insofar as they may be a direct factor causing past housing instability or loss and when related to the participant’s ability to obtain a disability-specific benefit, service, or accessible unit.
7. Leases for program participants are legally binding, written leases. Leases with additional requirements, such as drug testing or program participation, are not allowed.

### ***Program Activities***

8. The program participates in the local community’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), meaning they collect all required data standards and take steps to ensure quality data entry.
9. The program participates in and accepts referrals from the local coordinated entry system and participates in efforts to improve the efficiency and quality of referrals when necessary.
10. The rapid re-housing program must maintain and distribute information on alternative available resources that may intervene effectively and rapidly if the program’s services are unavailable or less effective.
11. The program has an ongoing performance improvement process that includes evaluation of participant outcomes and participant feedback. The performance benchmarks and standards in this document provide a framework for performance evaluation and performance improvement efforts.

### **Examples of Meeting Program Standards: Program Philosophy and Design**

Programs that meet the above standards include those that:

- Have eligibility criteria that prioritize rather than exclude people who have no employment or income, or who are disabled.
- Participate in a planning or performance improvement process for local coordinated entry system to ensure sufficient and proper referrals.
- Ensure that participants are not presented with and do not sign leases that have restrictions that a typical tenant would not receive.

**Exhibit B**  
**Rapid Re-housing RFP Evaluation Criteria**

**St. Louis Coordinated Entry Manual**

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54ca7491e4b000c4d5583d9c/t/5a691314085229de5d45e2db/1516835606947/Coordinated+Entry+Policies+and+Procedures+-+Final+01242018.pdf>

**More on St. Louis Coordinated Entry**

<https://www.icalliances.org/stlouisce>

**CoC HMIS Manual**

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoC-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf>

**CoC Best Practices - see document posted on rapid re-housing RFP webpage**

<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/human-services/homeless-services/coc-2017-new-rrh-project.cfm>

**CoC Performance Measures – see document posted on rapid re-housing RFP webpage**

<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/human-services/homeless-services/coc-2017-new-rrh-project.cfm>

**M/WBE ( Minority and/or Woman-Owned Business Enterprise)**

[https://oeo.mo.gov/oeo\\_certifications/](https://oeo.mo.gov/oeo_certifications/)

**DBE ( Disadvantaged Business Enterprise)**

[http://contribute.modot.mo.gov/business/contractor\\_resources/External\\_Civil\\_Rights/DBE\\_program.htm](http://contribute.modot.mo.gov/business/contractor_resources/External_Civil_Rights/DBE_program.htm)