

HOUSING FIRST POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CHECKLIST

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING / RAPID RE-HOUSING

Language Used Throughout Written Policies

- Client-centered language: Is language easily understandable, welcoming and flexible?
- Strengths-based language: Positive, flexible language such as “may” vs. “must”; encouraging rather than mandating

General Agency Practices

- Mission / Vision Statement: Do policies include the agency’s mission and/or vision statement?
- Housing First Overview: Do policies provide an overview of Housing First and what it means in relation to agency’s programs?

Intake and Enrollment

- Clear and Streamlined Intake and Enrollment Process: Staff are familiar with program specific intake and enrollment processes; Documentation is kept to a minimum as much as possible while meeting requirements of funders, etc., such as:
 - HMIS Release of Information
 - HMIS Intake
 - Eligibility Verification
 - Services Agreement
 - Grievance Policy
 - Termination Policy
 - Lease
 - Housing Quality Standards Inspection
 - Income Verification
 - Rent Calculation
- Minimal Eligibility Documentation Required: Do policies omit any unnecessary documentation / limit documentation requirements for eligibility to what is needed for funders and safety (such as certification of homelessness; disability documentation; verification of identity)?

Documentation

- Services Participation Documentation: Do policies explain that, while services participation is not required (unless mandated by a funder), it is highly encouraged and detail what documentation will be completed as part of services participation (ex. Individualized Services Plan; Vocational / Educational Plan; Employment, Training and/or Education verification)?

- Background Checks: Are background checks only performed as necessary and with consent?
- Income Certification / Documentation: Is income documentation and certification only required as necessary (such as at intake and annual recertification)?

Housing Policies

- Program Eligibility: Are there Low-Barriers to Eligibility / Participants are not denied eligibility based on mental health concerns, active substance use, lack of income, etc.?
- Lease: Is there a standard lease / occupancy language that provides all legal rights and responsibilities of tenancy, separate from supportive services policies?
- Housing Choice: Is tenant preference a primary consideration when selecting a housing unit, to the fullest extent possible, considering location, size, reasonable accommodation needs, etc.?
- Moving / Transfer Policy: Do policies allow for participants to be re-housed / transfer to another unit or program if they do not succeed in their initial placement?
- Rent Payment:
 - Do policies clearly state when, where and how rent payments are accepted?
 - Is there a process to address late rental payments / non-payment immediately and work with tenants to mitigate eviction due to non-payment of rent? (3-day notices; payment plan; reasonable accommodations; financial counseling)?
- Participant Grievance Policy: Do policies include a clear process for participant grievances to be heard and addressed?
- Evictions / Terminations:
 - Do evictions or terminations happen only as a “last resort” due to violence; threats; abandonment of unit; multiple, serious and irresolvable lease violations (i.e. repeated nonpayment of rent, disturbances, violation of guest policies); long-term institutionalization?
 - Is there a process to resolve lease violations to prevent eviction (behavioral contracts; payment plans; etc.)?
- Supportive Services / Case Management:
 - Are supportive services / case management models strengths-based, incorporating evidence-based practices such as harm reduction, progressive engagement, stages of change, etc.?
 - Are services voluntary and encouraged via easy access, incentives, relationship building, etc.?

Policy Notes and Next Steps: After checking the boxes on the previous pages where your policies/practices are in compliance with Housing First, use this space to take notes on **what your agency needs to do next** to ensure your program(s)' policies and procedures have the required and Housing First policies and

