



New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

Standards for Administering Albuquerque and New Mexico Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) Rapid ReHousing Assistance

Updated March 2017

NMCEH is required to establish policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive Rapid Re-Housing assistance (RRH). RRH should be targeted to households that need temporary housing assistance and services in order to maintain housing and have fewer barriers to housing and employment than people who need permanent supportive housing.

Use of the common standards of entry and the coordinated assessment system are requirements under the Continuum of Care (CoC) program. The CoC Impartial and Independent Review Committees will evaluate whether CoC programs have adhered to the standards and fully utilized the coordinated assessment system, along with other evaluation criteria, when making annual renewal determinations.

1. Eligibility Requirements

1. Must meet HUD's definition of homelessness as defined in the HEARTH Homeless Definition Final Rule.¹
2. Must meet any additional criteria stipulated in the CoC Notice of Funding Availability for the grant year under which the program is operating.

2. Prioritization

Albuquerque and Balance of State CoC Rapid ReHousing programs must use the statewide Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) to identify which individual or family they will house when they have an opening. The CAS uses the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) as its common assessment tool. The VI-SPDAT helps determine the vulnerability of a homeless household and which type of supportive housing would best meet their needs. Based on a household's answers to the VI-SPDAT, the household receives a vulnerability score between 0-17 for individuals and 0-23 for families. The score includes duration of homelessness, physical health, behavioral health, and other factors to come up with an overall assessment of vulnerability. Each household's VI-SPDAT is entered in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which calculates the score. All agencies that participate in the CAS are able to view in HMIS the homeless households that have completed the VI-SPDAT and are part of the CAS.

Rapid ReHousing Projects should prioritize households with a VI-SPDAT score of at least 4r. Rapid ReHousing is usually the most appropriate intervention for individuals that score between a 4 and 7 and for

¹ <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1928/hearth-defining-homeless-final-rule/>

families that score between a 4 and 8., If an individual or family receives a score higher than 7 or 8, respectively, they may be more appropriately assisted with permanent supportive housing and it is acceptable to direct a household to permanent supportive housing instead of providing rapid rehousing when it is deemed that this will better meet the needs of that household. However, Rapid ReHousing programs may also serve an individual who scores higher than a 7 or a family that scores higher than an 8 if they feel that household could benefit from Rapid ReHousing.

The CAS will rank homeless households in priority order according to their VI-SPDAT score. The higher the VI-SPDAT score, the higher the priority for the person or family to be placed into housing. In general, Rapid ReHousing programs should identify an individual who scored a 7 or a family that scored an 8 and work down the list from there.

Projects are allowed to accept 20% of their clients with a VI-SPDAT score lower than 4 where other factors justify placing these clients into housing and still be considered to be in full compliance with Coordinated Assessment. In this case, agency staff must write a letter explaining the reason that the household has been given priority and the agency must maintain written documentation on file.

Special procedures for Domestic Violence agencies

1. DV agencies with HUD funded programs are required to participate in Coordinated Assessment, but are not required to enter any data into HMIS. DV agencies should do the VI/SPDAT on paper for any potential transitional housing or rapid rehousing clients and compute the VI/SPDAT score manually.

3. Participation in Coordinated Assessment System

All programs that receive CoC funding are required to participate in the Coordinated Assessment System (CAS). In addition to filling housing openings through the CAS, all CoC agencies are also required to conduct VI-SPDATs with household individuals and families that are seeking supportive housing. The overall share of VI-SPDATs that each CoC program is expected to conduct will be worked out at the local level.

4. Documentation of Homeless Status

Homelessness must be documented as required under the Homeless Definition Final Rule. This can be found at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1928/hearth-defining-homeless-final-rule/>

5. Operation

A. Length of Stay

The maximum length of assistance under a rapid rehousing program is also 24 months. Programs may initially approve homeless households for a shorter length of assistance based on the estimated time for the household to be able to pay rent on their own, and grant extensions as needed. Homeless households should be reassessed at least every six months to determine their need for further assistance.

B. Client Rent

All clients enrolled in Rapid ReHousing programs that receive rental assistance funds must pay a contribution toward rent in accordance with section 3(a)(1) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(a)(1)). This statute states that the household must pay the highest of:

a) 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (adjustment factors include the number of people in the family, age of family members, medical expenses, and child-care expenses);

(b) 10 percent of the family's monthly income; or

(c) If the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of the payments (adjusted in accordance with the family's actual housing costs) is specifically designated by the agency to meet the family's housing costs, the portion of the payments that is designated for housing costs.

C. Fair Market Rent and Rent Reasonableness Standards

The rent paid must be reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable units, taking into account the location, size, type, quality, amenities, facilities, and management services. Rents may exceed HUD fair market rents, as long as the rent is reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable units.