



**Portsmouth Homeless Action Consortium (PHAC)**

**Portsmouth Coordinated Assessment Network (PCAN)  
a case conferencing committee of the  
Portsmouth Coordinated Entry System (CES)**

**Policy & Procedure Guidelines**

**All PHAC providers that receive HUD funding, which includes CoC Programs or Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and/or Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) funds are required per HUD guidance to participate in the Coordinated Entry System (CES).** Those housing projects may include Transitional Housing (TH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), or Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and as such they must participate in PCAN.

### **Purpose**

Homeless Households are presented at Portsmouth Coordinated Assessment Network (PCAN), a provider forum where cases are prioritized based on vulnerability and referrals are made based on vulnerability to available housing resources.

### **Guiding Principles**

PHAC follows defined guidelines in prioritizing housing for the most vulnerable. To achieve this practice, PHAC also observes guiding principles that include a commitment to the following—

**A “Housing First” Approach:** this client-focused approach is focused on getting households into permanent housing first and then providing supportive services, as needed to help sustain and maintain their housing status. Supportive services could include employment, mental health, substance abuse treatment, coaching and counseling.

**Fair Housing:** as recipients of federal and state funding, PHAC providers comply with all applicable laws related to housing, including—

- Fair Housing Act, prohibiting housing discrimination based on race, color, gender (sex), national origin, disability or familial status.
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color or national origin.
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, prohibiting discrimination based on disability
- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, prohibiting discrimination from private entities that own, lease and operate places of public accommodation from discriminating based on disability and covers shelters, social service providers.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**Vulnerability Prioritization:** ensuring that all decisions are made based on vulnerability in accordance with HUD Notice CPD-016-11. This also includes prioritizing Veterans and Chronic Homeless.

**Low Barrier Access:** meaning we will continually seek to reduce barriers to accessing sheltering and housing, which could include requirements of sobriety, income, employment and/or absence of criminal record.

### **Housing Resource Referrals**

An agency that has an available housing unit, must notify CES either by email at [centralintake@parc.hrcoxmail.com](mailto:centralintake@parc.hrcoxmail.com) or fax at (757)397-2975 of *when the unit will ready for occupancy*. The next eligible case will then be referred to that agency for consideration.

The CES makes referrals to all programs (projects) within the Portsmouth CoC. The referrals are routed through CES to the PCAN committee for case conferencing and prioritization to identify the next eligible household when programs have openings. Eligibility and screening criteria for each provider's program are used to ensure that clients are being appropriately referred. Providers are required to submit their program criteria updates/ program changes to the CES through Central Intake a repository for all information related to the Coordinated Entry System and to Portsmouth Department of Social Services (PDSS) as the collaborative agency. The Portsmouth CoC strives to use available resources effectively and efficiently to serve the most vulnerable in the homeless community.

When a potential housing resource has been identified through PCAN, the case manager or another designated point-of-contact (navigator, client specialist or advocate) will notify the household. The receiving agency would contact the household within seven (7) business days to schedule an appointment. After meeting with the household, the receiving agency has seven (7) business days to provide a disposition of the referral into HMIS. Non-PHAC agencies or non-HMIS participating agencies, case managers or client advocates desiring to present a household to PCAN *must* collaborate with Central Intake for presentation at PCAN.

Referrals may be declined if the household is unable to be reached or does not meet the program's eligibility criteria. The agency is asked to notify the household and disposition entered into HMIS within three (3) business days. The household is then returned to their previous prioritization order or until they are determined to be inactive.

PCAN referrals Off-week: Should a housing resource become available during the off- week of PCAN then the housing resource information would be emailed to Central Intake who would then identify the next eligible household based on prioritization. Central Intake would then send an email with HMIS number only to participating agencies asking for approval of referral. Update on response and status would be reported at next regular PCAN meeting.

### **Case Conferencing Meetings**

PHAC participating agencies and their identified representatives are required to attend bi-weekly case conferencing meetings currently held every other Mondays except in the case of Federal or State holidays and then the meeting will move to Tuesday following the holiday. All new client referrals must be received by COB Wednesday prior to the next PCAN meeting either by email at [centralintake@parc.hrcoxmail.com](mailto:centralintake@parc.hrcoxmail.com) or fax at (757)397-2975.

## Single Prioritized List

PHAC has adopted a Single Prioritized List (SPL) for all PCAN case conferencing. The SPL will be maintained by CES Central Intake and updates will be maintained by Central Intake once received. The SPL is made of the following 4 categories and will include additional information for determining prioritization.

- Active
  - Those households that have been prioritized, and are awaiting available housing resource
- Pending
  - Those households who have been identified as homeless and are awaiting prioritization and those pending exit of a TH program.
- Housed
  - Those households who have been housed whether PSH, TH, RRH or Self Resolve
- Inactive
  - Those households who have been identified as Active or Pending and are unable to be located after 45 days and have been declared inactive by the presenting agency or representative.

The following information will also be maintained on the Single Prioritization List.

- A non-identifying ID (HMIS number or other acceptable non-identifiable method for DV), Head of Household (HOH) age, Length of Homelessness (LOH), Frequency of Homelessness Episodes and required Severe Service Need if applicable to determine eligibility.
  - The household appropriate VI-SPDAT, housing request by presenter, referral status and any additional continuum or non-continuum providers being utilized by the client will be maintained in order to document the required recordkeeping as reflected on page 11 of HUD Notice CPD-16-11.
  - All documentation will be the responsibility of the presenting agency. Incomplete documentation could subject the household to being placed on the pending list.
- ***PHAC CES has adopted that in all Homeless Veteran(s) households or Homeless Families with Children who meet the criteria as outlined will receive priority over other households within the CoC.***
    - ***If no Veteran Household or Families with Children are identified then the order of priority will be followed as established.***
    - ***If no chronic household is identified then priority will be given as outlined by HUD Notice CPD-16-11 as attached.***

## Assessment

The CoC has agreed to the use of one assessment tool city wide along with case conferencing discussions (PCAN) to identify the most vulnerable households.

For single households, the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) and for Families, the VI-(F) SPDAT, and the VI-(Y) SPDAT for Youth who are 18-24 years of age will be used. All VI-SPDAT assess vulnerability in 5 areas:

- History of housing and homelessness
- Risks
- Socialization and daily functioning

- Wellness – including chronic health conditions, substance usage, mental illness, and trauma and
- Family unit (if applicable).

Once a client referral is received, the agency or another designated point-of-contact (navigator, case manager, client specialist or advocate) will conduct a complete assessment to determine the most appropriate housing resource. Households are prioritized based on their VI-SPDAT score, length of homelessness, and severity of service needs to determine if the household meets the Chronic Homeless designation as outlined in HUD Notice CPD-14-012 for PSH referral.

During the VI-SPDAT assessment, the tool is explained and consent is secured before the assessment can be conducted. Households are advised of their right to refuse consent to share information and that their refusal will not prevent them from receiving services.

### **Client Rights**

All households have a choice regarding what housing resource is best for them. If a household declines a referral they will be returned to their prioritization order until a future housing resource becomes available or they are deemed inactive. The CES strives to meet the needs of the households it serves.

### **Housing Programs: Eligibility and Prioritization**

There are a variety of housing programs (projects) supported by PHAC provider agencies. Each housing program may have specific requirements and availability as well as funding levels. At any given time, these programs are available based on vacancies and funding. *The amount of rent each program participant may be required to pay is determined by the household's budget and will be the least amount of financial assistance necessary based on household needs and housing barriers.*

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - housing for households with disabilities or a family in which a child or adult has a disability. Financial assistance is provided as long as needed along with supportive services. Chronically homeless households are eligible and prioritized for PSH.

**Transitional Housing (TH)** - is temporary housing for up to 12 months that provides housing and supportive services. TH helps bridge households to independence and permanent housing. Homeless households with notable housing barriers (i.e. multiple evictions) are eligible and prioritized for TH.

**Rapid Rehousing (RRH)** - moves households from homelessness into permanent housing by offering short term rent assistance. Household eligibility criteria will be based on VI-SPDAT score and length of homelessness.

**In accordance with HUD Notice CPD-16-11, The Portsmouth Homeless Action Consortium (PHAC) through its Coordinated Entry System and PCAN adopted the following as the prioritization for available housing resources within the CoC.**

**Notice CPD-16-11: Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing**

Date Published: July 2016

**Description**

This Notice supersedes [Notice CPD-14-012](#) and provides guidance to Continuums of Care (CoC) and recipients of CoC Program (24 CFR part 578) funding for permanent supportive housing (PSH) regarding the order in which eligible households should be served in all CoC Program-funded PSH. This Notice reflects the new definition of chronically homeless as defined in CoC Program interim rule as amended by the [Final Rule on Defining “Chronically Homeless”](#) (herein referred to as the Definition of Chronically Homeless final rule) and updates the orders of priority that were established under the prior Notice.

HUD seeks to achieve two goals through this Notice:

Establish an updated order of priority for dedicated and prioritized PSH which CoCs are encouraged to adopt in order to ensure that those persons with the longest histories residing in places not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelters, and in safe havens and with the most severe service needs are given first priority.

Establish a recommended order of priority for PSH that is not dedicated or prioritized for chronic homelessness in order to ensure that those persons who do not yet meet the definition of chronic homelessness but have the longest histories of homelessness and the most severe service needs, and are therefore the most at risk of becoming chronically homeless, are prioritized.

Please note that the final regulation on the definition of “chronically homeless” was published in the Federal Register on December 4, 2015. CoC recipients must comply with the regulations promulgated by this rule as of January 15, 2016.

**First Priority–**

***Homeless Households and Families with a Disability with Long Periods of Episodic Homelessness and Severe Service Needs.***

An individual or family that is eligible for CoC Program-funded PSH who has experienced fewer than four occasions where they have been living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter but where the cumulative time homeless is at least 12 months and has been identified as having severe service needs.

**Second Priority–**

***Homeless Households and Families with a Disability with Severe Service Needs.***

An individual or family that is eligible for CoC Program-funded PSH who is residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter and has been identified as having severe service needs. The length of time in which households have been homeless should also be considered when prioritizing households that meet this order of priority, but there is not a minimum length of time required.

### **Third Priority-**

#### ***Homeless Households and Families with a Disability Coming from Places Not Meant for Human Habitation, Safe Haven, or Emergency Shelter Without Severe Service Needs.***

An individual or family that is eligible for CoC Program-funded PSH who is residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter where the individual or family has not been identified as having severe service needs. The length of time in which households have been homeless should be considered when prioritizing households that meet this order of priority, but there is not a minimum length of time required.

### **Fourth Priority-**

#### ***Homeless Households and Families with a Disability Coming from Transitional Housing.***

An individual or family that is eligible for CoC Program-funded PSH who is currently residing in a transitional housing project, where prior to residing in the transitional housing had lived in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven. This priority also includes households and families residing in transitional housing who were fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and prior to residing in that transitional housing project even if they did not live in a place not meant for human habitation, an emergency shelter, or a safe haven prior to entry in the transitional housing.

*\*\*\*Pages 9 & 10 of HUD Notice CPD-16-11 Issues July 25, 2016*

### **Dedication and Prioritization of Permanent Supportive Housing Strategies to Increase Number of PSH Beds Available for Chronically Homeless Persons**

Dedicated PSH beds are those which are required through the project's grant agreement to only be used to house persons experiencing chronic homelessness unless there are no persons within the CoC that meet that criteria. If there are no persons within the CoC's geographic area that meet the definition of chronically homeless at a point in which a dedicated PSH bed is vacant, the recipient may then follow the order of priority for non-dedicated PSH established in this Notice, if it has been adopted into the CoC's written standards. The bed will continue to be a dedicated bed, however, so when that bed becomes vacant again it must be used to house a chronically homeless person unless there are still no persons who meet that criterion within the CoC's geographic area at that time.

**Recordkeeping Recommendations for CoC's that have Adopted the Orders of Priority in this Notice** 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4) outlines documentation requirements for all recipients of dedicated and non-dedicated CoC Program-funded PSH associated with determining whether or not an individual or family is chronically homeless for the purposes of eligibility. In addition to those requirements, HUD expects that where CoC's have adopted the orders of priority in Section III. of this Notice into their written standards. The CoC, as well as recipients of CoC Program-funded PSH, will maintain evidence of implementing these priorities. Evidence of following these orders of priority may be demonstrated by:

- **Evidence of Severe Service Needs.** Evidence of severe service needs is that by which the recipient is able to determine the severity of needs as defined in Section I.D.3. of this Notice using data-driven methods such as an administrative data match or through the use

of a standardized assessment. The documentation should include any information pertinent to how the determination was made, such as notes associated with case conferencing decisions.

- **Evidence that the Recipient is Following the CoC’s Written Standards for Prioritizing Assistance.** Recipients must follow the CoC’s written standards for prioritizing assistance, as adopted by the CoC. In accordance with the CoC’s adoption of 12 written standards for prioritizing assistance, recipients must in turn document that the CoC’s revised written standards have been incorporated into the recipient’s intake procedures and that the recipient is following its intake procedures when accepting new program participants into the project.
- **Evidence that there are no Households Meeting Higher Order of Priority within CoC’s Geographic Area.**
  - When dedicated and prioritized PSH is used to serve non-chronically homeless households, the recipient of CoC Program-funded PSH should document how it was determined that there were no chronically homeless households identified for assistance within the CoC’s geographic area – or for those CoC’s that implement a sub-CoC 3 planning and housing and service delivery approach, the smaller defined geographic area within the CoC’s geographic area – at the point in which a vacancy became available.

This documentation should include evidence of the outreach efforts that had been undertaken to locate eligible chronically homeless households within the defined geographic area and, where chronically homeless households have been identified but have not yet accepted assistance, the documentation should specify the number of persons that are chronically homeless that meet this condition and the attempts that have been made to engage the individual or family. Where a CoC is using a single prioritized list, the recipient of PSH may refer to that list as evidence.

When non-dedicated and non-prioritized PSH is used to serve an eligible individual or family that meets a lower order of priority, the recipient of CoC Program-funded PSH should document how the determination was made that there were no eligible households or families within the CoC’s geographic area - or for those CoC’s that implement a sub-CoC planning and housing and service delivery approach, the smaller defined geographic area within the CoC’s geographic area - that met a higher priority. Where a CoC is using a single prioritized list, the recipient of PSH may refer to that list as evidence that there were no households identified within the CoC’s geographic area that meet a higher order of priority.

### **Data Management**

The CES utilizes the Hampton Roads Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and manage data. HMIS Policies and Procedures ensure adequate privacy protections of all participant information per the HMIS Data and Technical Standards at 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8). All users of HMIS participate in mandatory training on the privacy rules associated with collection, management, and reporting of client data and sign agreements to adhere to these policies and practices. The same privacy protections and rules associated with the use of HMIS are applied in the handling and managing other client confidential and personal information.



**Release of Information (ROI)**

The CES has adopted the use of the Hampton Roads Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the use of the Hampton Roads HMIS Client Consent Form (aka ROI) as prepared by The Planning Council and the PHAC Consent to Exchange Information agreement in order to make the necessary CoC referrals. In the event of Veteran Services Determination, an additional Veteran ROI as established by the Department of Veteran Affairs will be obtained for Veterans seeking assistance. All signed ROI will be uploaded into the client HMIS file.

**PENDING CHANGE to CES 4/1/2020 Expected Launch:**

Once an assessment is complete, referrals to TH, RRH, and PSH will go to the PCI (Portsmouth Central Intake) via ServicePoint HMIS. Central Intake staff will review the referral and update the SPL as appropriate. Case Manager or another designated point-of-contact (navigator, client specialist or advocate) are encouraged to contact PCI for confirmation their referral made the list and may contact the CE coordinator with any questions or concerns regarding referrals added or not added to the SPL.

**Acronyms:**

- HUD: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
- CoC- Continuum of Care
- PHAC- Portsmouth Homeless Action Consortium
- PCAN- Portsmouth Coordinated Assessment Network, a case conferencing committee of CES
- PCI- Portsmouth Central Intake
- HOH- Head of Household
- HMIS- Homeless Management Information System
- PSH- Permanent Supportive Housing
- RRH- Rapid Re-Housing Program
- TH- Transitional Housing
- VI-(F) SPDAT - Vulnerability Index Family Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool
- VI-SPDAT - Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool
- VI-(Y) SPDAT- Vulnerability Index Youth Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool

