

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health

**Countywide Housing, Employment and Education Resource Development
Federal Housing Subsidies Unit (FHSU)**

**HOMELESS SECTION 8 (HS8)
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES (HACLA)

I. Purpose

These guidelines and procedures have been developed for Department of Mental Health (DMH) directly operated and contract staff (case manager) to assist their clients who are homeless with accessing DMH Homeless Section 8 (HS8) program permanent supportive housing resources. The purpose is also to ensure the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) administered HS8 program grant requirements are met.

II. Procedures

A. Outreach to Homeless Clients

Street and shelter based outreach will be conducted to engage individuals that are homeless and have a mental illness. A clinical assessment will be conducted and DMH eligible clients will be linked to services and housing.

- Field based outreach will be conducted by any DMH funded programs that target individuals and families that are homeless and have a mental illness;
- Clients will be engaged using evidenced based practices such as Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction and Housing First;
- The appropriate Coordinated Entry System (CES) survey will be conducted with the individual/family and a DMH Authorization to Disclose PHI form will be obtained from the client;
- CES survey will be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

B. Intake and Assessment

A Housing Intake and Needs Assessment will be completed with clients that are homeless to determine their housing needs, eligibility for various housing resources and to develop a housing plan.

- The Housing Intake and Needs Assessment form will be completed with the client and a copy will be submitted with any federal housing subsidy application;
- A housing plan developed in partnership with the client will be documented on the Housing Intake and Needs Assessment form.

C. CES matching process for HS8 DMH Resources

- All clients will be identified for/matched to HS8 resources through CES. See Exhibit I.

D. Completion and Submission of the HS8 Application

Clients matched to HS8 housing subsidies will be assisted to complete and submit the application. FHSU will provide technical assistance to the case manager working directly with the client.

- The client must meet the HUD definition of homelessness throughout the application process;
- The client must identify all family members who will be residing with her/him;
- The client and all adults in the household must submit to and pass a criminal background check;
- All documents in the application package must not be more than 30 days old on the date the application is submitted to HACLA;
- All forms shall be completed in their entirety. All questions should have a response including "N/A.";
- Applications for HS8 must be submitted by the case manager to FHSU;
- FHSU will review each application for accuracy and completeness;
- FHSU will submit completed applications to the Housing Authority and is responsible for follow-up with HACLA regarding the status of the application;
- Case managers are required to transport, if necessary, and accompany the client to HACLA for the application interview;

- Case managers are responsible for assisting clients with correcting any incomplete applications and providing any missing documents;
- FHSU is responsible for notifying the case manager of the voucher issuance appointment date/time;
- Case managers will accompany the client to HACLA for the issuance appointment;
- Case managers are responsible for sending a copy of the voucher to FHSU.

E. Housing Search

Case managers will assist the family with locating safe, affordable permanent housing units in accordance with their needs and that are accessible to community resources.

- Housing search may include: housing websites such as housing.lacounty.gov, vacancy listings, HACLA's Housing Incentive Program (HIP) and the network of relationships already developed with local landlords and property owners;
- Case managers will assist clients to prepare for interviews with landlords;
- Case managers will accompany clients to visit prospective rentals and help negotiate with landlords as needed;
- Case managers will assist in completing lease agreements
- Case managers will forward the date the RFTA was submitted to HACLA and a copy of signed Lease Agreement to the FHSU;
- Case managers will assist clients with clearing up credit records or arranging for representative payee services, if needed;
- Case managers can assist with obtaining appliances, furniture and household furnishings and other household goods via donations and/or will assist participants with completion of applications for security deposit assistance and household goods;
- Case managers will assist clients with obtaining food, clothing and personal care items, from a number of other sources, as needed;

- Case managers will assist clients with obtaining all benefit entitlement and assistance programs they are eligible for including Social Security Income and MediCal/ Affordable Care Act.

F. Supportive Services

Integrated, recovery-focused mental health and supportive services will be provided by DMH case managers.

- DMH services include a comprehensive, individualized clinical needs assessment which determines the type, frequency, and duration of supportive services provided to HS8 participants;
 - This assessment addresses the full range of service needs, including mental health, medical, financial, housing, social, educational and vocational needs, adhering to the principles of client wellness and recovery;
 - Based on this assessment, case managers will assist in the development of a treatment plan that identifies service objectives, and the activities and timeframes for achieving them;
 - The treatment plan will include linkages to other social service and medical providers as needed;
 - Treatment plan should include a housing goal;
- Case management and supportive services will be offered for as long as the client needs these services
- Clients will be provided crisis services as needed by their direct case manager or through DMH crisis services such as the Psychiatric Mobile Response Team;
- Supportive services, including housing services should be documented by the case managers in the form of clinical paper record or electronic health record in accordance with DMH Policy 401.02.

G. Housing Retention

Families will be provided with supportive services to assist them with successfully integrating into the community and with connecting with community supports and activities that will assist them to live independently.

- Case managers will assist individuals and families with money management and preparation of household budgets;
- Case managers will provide families with supports related to housekeeping, independent living skills and tenant obligations to the HS8 landlord and HACLA;
- Case managers will mentor clients in the use of home appliances, including stoves, vacuum cleaners, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency exits. Clients will also be helped to familiarize themselves with the neighborhood, bus lines, shopping and other amenities;
- Case managers will assist with averting possible evictions by promptly addressing any concerns from property owners/managers and/or clients and will assist clients with negotiating/developing plans of correction;
- Case managers are responsible for notifying FHSU when a client no longer engages in services, dies or moves out of the HS8 funded unit;
- Case managers are responsible to complete home visit, document them on the required form and submit them to FHSU for the quarterly reports for the first year the client is receiving a HS8 funded subsidy;
- Case managers will assist clients with HACLA's annual housing renewal process;
- If a client is transferred to another program, case manager will notify the new program that the client is receiving a HS8 subsidy and will obtain a signed Provider Responsibility form from the new provider to ensure they understand all program requirements and will forward a copy of the signed form to FHSU;
- Clients who move to another jurisdiction and/or move out of the County will be linked to services in that community by the case manager;
- Clients who disengage from DMH services will be outreached on a regular basis by a field based DMH homeless services program, such as the SB 82 Mobile Triage Team. FHSU will initiate the referral.

H. Contract and Reporting Requirements

FHSU is responsible for administering and monitoring the HS8 contract in order to fulfill program requirements.

- FHSU will enroll participants into the HMIS as required by the Agreement;
- FHSU will keep a list of all HS8 referrals and participants and will track milestones in the housing process;
- FHSU is responsible for tracking data requirements and for producing quarterly and annual reports.