



**Sonoma County Continuum of Care Board
Executive Summary**

Item: 3- Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Policy Amendment to Coordinated Entry System for EHV Program (Action Items)

Date: July 21, 2021

Staff Contact: Thai Hilton Coordinated Entry Coordinator Thai.Hilton@sonoma-county.org

Agenda Item Overview

CEA committee met on July 2nd and 16th to decide on referral paths for the subpopulations who will be served by the EHV program. The Committee decided on the following referral paths for the EHV program

- **Move On:** Use the current Move-On voucher process which is; to have PSH providers refer their clients to the housing authorities and to amend the CES policies and procedures to allow the enrollment of people who are not literally homeless.
- **High utilizers of medical care:** “Community Transitions of Care” is the body that will refer clients to these vouchers in this subpopulation.
- **TAY:** SAY will refer TAY to vouchers for this subpopulation.
- **Chronically Homeless:** The referrals will be done on a tiered process. 1st referrals would be taken from the CE list. CE will check with providers to make sure individuals are engaged with supportive services. 2nd referrals would come from various community BNLs with inclusion of lists from all parts of the county to ensure geographic equity. 3rd referrals will come from outreach teams in the county who can support clients.
- **Domestic Violence:** YWCA will refer individuals for this subpopulation.

The CEA committee also voted to recommend approval of two policy amendments to CES policies and procedures to allow the enrollment of individuals who do not meet the federal definition of homelessness to allow for referral to the EHV program. A second policy amendment allows this policy to remain in place in the event that another situation arises in which the CoC would like to serve individuals who would not meet the current requirements of CES. The CEA committee was not able to review the MOUs for the EHV program but will do so at their July 21st meeting.

Committee Recommendation: Accept the following amendment to the CES policies and procedures.

Proposed amendment to CES policy to allow for enrollment of individuals who do not meet category 1, 2 or 4 homeless to allow for access to EHV program

Amendment for only the EHV: This policy has been amended to allow access to unstably housed individuals and families currently residing in Rapid Rehousing programs to the Emergency Housing Voucher Program. Unstably housed individuals and families currently residing in Rapid Rehousing programs are defined as those who are currently participating in a Rapid Rehousing program and who will likely not be able to maintain their housing and may return to homelessness once the subsidy ends.



In addition, this policy has been amended to allow access to individuals and families who are currently residing in Permanent Supportive Housing programs that can be served more appropriately through a direct referral to a voucher subsidy. These individuals and families must have met HUD's definition of Chronic Homeless status, documented, prior to entry of the PSH program and are no longer requiring the intensive case management services paired with PSH programs.

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on _____ between

Public Housing Agency (PHA)

*Sonoma County Housing Authority (CA085)
1440 Guerneville Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95403*

Continuum of Care (CoC)

*Sonoma County Continuum of Care
CA-504 – Santa Rosa, Petaluma – Sonoma County CoC
Sonoma County Community Development Commission
1440 Guerneville Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95402*

The purpose of this MOU is to outline the partnership between the above-named parties in the administration of the Emergency Housing Voucher program as required in Public and Indian Housing (PIH) Notice 2021-15 Emergency Housing Vouchers – Operating Requirements, as of the date of this MOU or any subsequent amendments to this program.

I. Introduction and Goals:

- a. PHA and CoC's commitment to administering the EHV's in accordance with all program requirements.
- b. PHA goals and standards of success in administering the program.
- c. Identification of staff position at the PHA and CoC who will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.

Lead PHA EHV Liaison: Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager

Responsibilities of the PHA EHV liaison:

- Coordination with Sonoma County Continuum of Care Ending Homelessness Program Manager
- Administration of Emergency Housing Voucher rental assistance
- Accept referrals for Emergency Housing Vouchers as prescribed in this Memorandum of Understanding

Lead CoC EHV Liaison: Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Program Manager

Responsibilities of the CoC EHV Liaison :

- Coordinate with Manager of the Sonoma County Housing Authority
- Coordinate communications with Continuum of Care Board and Continuum of Care Member Agencies
- Data sharing and collaboration with Coordinated Entry System

II. Define the populations eligible for EHV assistance to be referred by CoC.

As of the date of the execution of this MOU, the Sonoma County Housing Authority is expected to receive 153 Emergency Housing Vouchers. The number of vouchers is subject to change based on future funding adjustments through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Eligibility for Emergency Housing Vouchers is limited by PIH Notice 2021-15 to: individuals and families¹ who are experiencing homelessness; at risk of experiencing homelessness; fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

The parties acknowledge that there are not enough Emergency Housing Vouchers to meet the needs of all persons experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. Therefore, this MOU further defines the target populations that will be prioritized for referrals by the CoC to the PHA for Emergency Housing Voucher assistance as follows:

Percentage of populations targeted:

- 30% Chronically Homeless (approximately 46 vouchers out of 153)
 - Must be actively engaged with case management and/or consistently engaged with street outreach and beginning active engagement with case management
- 30% Chronically Homeless and currently in PSH program (approximately 46 out of 153)
 - Chronically homeless/formerly chronically homeless in Permanent Supportive Housing and ready to move on to other permanent housing
- 10% Chronically Homeless and identified as high users of emergency medical services (approximately 15 vouchers out of 153)

¹ Under the Housing Choice Voucher program regulations at 24 CFR 982.4, the term “family” is a person or a group of persons, as determined by the PHA consistent with 24 CFR 5.403, approved to reside in a unit with assistance under the program. The term “family” used in EHV and HCV context always includes a family that is comprised of a single individual as well as a group of persons.

- 20% to homeless families or formerly homeless families participating in Rapid Rehousing program and at risk of homelessness/housing instability (approximately 31 vouchers out of 153)
- 5% Survivors of Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking (approximately 8 vouchers out of 153)
- 5% Transitional Age Youth Experiencing Homelessness (approximately 8 vouchers out of 153)

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families by the CoC service providers

1. CoC service providers will support individuals and families in completing applications and obtaining necessary supporting documentation to support referrals and applications for assistance; CoC service providers will provide direct assistance to households in addressing barriers or ensure that households receive the necessary support to complete PHA paperwork and obtain necessary documentation.
2. CoC service providers will support PHAs in ensuring that households receive appointment notifications and will assist eligible households in getting to meetings with the PHA, returning phone calls to the PHA and responding to correspondence from the PHA.
3. CoC service providers will provide housing search assistance for eligible individuals and families.
4. CoC service providers will provide counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and provide ongoing housing stability counseling for at least the first year of households' participation in EHV.
5. CoC service providers will assess individuals and families who may require referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits.
6. CoC service providers will assess and refer individuals and families to benefits and supportive services, where applicable.

IV. PHA Roles and Responsibilities

1. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the CoC Coordinated Entry System.
2. Commit the necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and voucher issuance processes are completed.
3. Commit resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
4. Designate staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
5. Comply with the provisions of this MOU and the provisions of PIH Notice 2021-15.

V. CoC Roles and Responsibilities

1. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with the PHA.
2. Ensure that CoC service providers are meeting their obligations under this MOU.
3. Ensure that eligible individuals and families are referred to the PHA using the community's coordinated entry system.
4. Follow CoC Board direction to link the provision of vouchers to the availability of funding for ongoing case management.
5. Ensure that eligible individuals and households are supported by CoC service providers in completing and applying for supportive documentation to accompany admissions application to the PHA (i.e., birth certificate, social security card, etc.).
6. Ensure that CoC service providers attend EHV participant briefings and PHA appointments when needed.
7. Ensure that all households referred for EHV are assessed for mainstream benefits and supportive services available to support eligible individuals and families through their transition.
8. Identify and provide supportive services to EHV families. While EHV participants are not required to participate in services, the CoC should assure that services are available and accessible.
9. Ensure that CoC service provider is providing housing stabilization services for no less than one year after an EHV family is housed.
10. Create a *Guide for EHV Participants* as a resource to include contact information for the CoC, PHA and Service Providers and to include directions on how to enroll in the coordinated entry system and the comparable referral process for domestic violence and human trafficking victim referrals.
11. Comply with the provisions of this MOU and the provisions of PIH Notice 2021-15.

VI. Program Evaluation

PHA and CoC will also regularly evaluate the shared responsibilities and compliance with the terms of the MOU and the EHV program requirements.

The PHA and CoC, or designated CoC recipient, agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

The following data points will be used to measure progress in the EHV program on a quarterly basis:

1. Number of vouchers under lease (data to be provided by the Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
2. Number of vouchers issued but not under lease (data to be provided by the Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)

- 3. Number of new units under lease with an EHV (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
- 4. Race and ethnicity of EHV participants (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
- 5. Regional Location of EHV participant at the time of referral to the program (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
- 6. Regional Location of EHV program leases (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
- 7. Length of EHV program participation as measured by date of lease-up to End of Participation (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)

Signed and dated by the official representatives of the PHA and CoC,

Signed by:

Dave Kiff

Interim Executive Director,
Sonoma County Housing Authority

Date

CoC Executive Director

Date

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on _____ between

Public Housing Agency (PHA)

*City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority (CA088)
City of Santa Rosa Department of Housing and Community Services
90 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA*

and

Continuum of Care (CoC)

*Sonoma County Continuum of Care
CA-504 – Santa Rosa, Petaluma/Sonoma County CoC
Sonoma County Community Development Commission
1440 Guerneville Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95402*

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I. Introduction and Goals:

- a. PHA and CoC commitment to administering the EHV's in accordance with all program requirements.
- b. PHA goals and standards of success in administering the program.
- c. Identification of staff position at the PHA and CoC who will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.

Lead PHA EHV Liaison: Rebecca Lane, Housing and Community Services Manager

Responsibilities of the PHA EHV liaison:

- Coordination with Sonoma County Continuum of Care Ending Homelessness Program Manager
- Administration of Emergency Housing Voucher rental assistance
- Accept referrals for Emergency Housing Vouchers as prescribed in this Memorandum of Understanding

Lead CoC EHV Liaison: Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Program Manager

Responsibilities of the CoC EHV liaison:

- Coordinate with City of Santa Rosa Housing and Community Services Manager
- Coordinate communications with Continuum of Care Board and Continuum of Care Member Agencies
- Data sharing and collaboration with Coordinated Entry System

II. Define the populations eligible for EHV assistance to be referred by CoC

As of the date of the execution of this MOU, the City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority is expected to receive 131 Emergency Housing Vouchers. The number of vouchers is subject to change based on future funding adjustments through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Eligibility for Emergency Housing Vouchers is limited by PIH Notice 2021-15 to: individuals and families¹ who are experiencing homelessness; at risk of experiencing homelessness; fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

The parties acknowledge that there are not enough Emergency Housing Vouchers to meet the needs of all persons experiencing homelessness in the city of Santa Rosa. Therefore, this MOU further defines the target populations that will be prioritized for referrals by the CoC to the PHA for Emergency Housing Voucher assistance as follows:

- **30% to Chronically Homeless (approximately 39 vouchers out of 131)**
 - Must be actively engaged with case management and/or consistently engages with street outreach and beginning active engagement with case management
- **30% to Chronically Homeless and currently in PSH program (approximately 39 vouchers out of 131)**
 - Chronically homelessness/formerly chronically homeless in PSH and ready to move on
- **10% to Chronically Homeless and identified as high users of emergency medical services (approximately 13 vouchers out of 131)**

¹ Under the Housing Choice Voucher program regulations at 24 CFR 982.4, the term "family" is a person or a group of persons, as determined by the PHA consistent with 24 CFR 5.403, approved to reside in a unit with assistance under the program. The term "family" used in EHV and HCV context always includes a family that is comprised of a single individual as well as a group of persons.

- **20% to homeless families or formerly homeless families participating in RRH and at risk of homelessness/housing instability (approximately 26 vouchers out of 131)**
- **5% to Survivors of Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking (approximately 6 vouchers out of 131)**
- **5% to Transitional Age Youth Experiencing Homelessness (approximately 6 vouchers out of 131 vouchers)**

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families by the CoC service providers

1. CoC service providers will support individuals and families in completing applications and obtaining necessary supporting documentation to support referrals and applications for assistance; CoC service providers will provide direct assistance to households in addressing barriers or ensure that households receive the necessary support to complete PHA paperwork and obtain necessary documentation.
2. CoC service providers will support PHAs in ensuring that households receive appointment notifications and will assist eligible households in getting to meetings with the PHA, returning phone calls to the PHA and responding to correspondence from the PHA.
3. CoC service providers will provide housing search assistance for eligible individuals and families.
4. CoC service providers will provide counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and provide ongoing housing stability counseling for at least the first year of households' participation in EHV.
5. CoC service providers will assess individuals and families who may require referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits.
6. CoC service providers will assess and refer individuals and families to benefits and supportive services, where applicable.

IV. PHA Roles and Responsibilities

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3. Commit resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed.
4. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
5. Comply with the provisions of this MOU and the provisions of PIH Notice 2021-15.

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2. Ensure that CoC service providers are meeting their obligations under this MOU.
3. Ensure that eligible individuals and families are referred to the PHA using the community's coordinated entry system.
4. Follow CoC Board direction to link the provision of vouchers to the availability of funding for ongoing case management.
5. Ensure that eligible individuals and households are supported by CoC service providers in completing and applying for supportive documentation to accompany admissions application to the PHA (i.e., birth certificate, social security card, etc.).
6. Ensure that CoC service providers attend EHV participant briefings and PHA appointments when needed.
7. Ensure that all households referred for EHV are assessed for mainstream benefits and supportive services available to support eligible individuals and families through their transition.
8. Identify and provide supportive services to EHV families. While EHV participants are not required to participate in services, the CoC should assure that services are available and accessible.
9. Ensure that CoC service provider is providing housing stabilization services for no less than one year after an EHV family is housed.
10. Create a *Guide for EHV Participants* as a resource to include contact information for the CoC, PHA and Service Providers and to include directions on how to enroll in the coordinated entry system and the comparable referral process for domestic violence and human trafficking victim referrals.
11. Comply with the provisions of this MOU and the provisions of PIH Notice 2021-15.

VI. Program Evaluation

The PHA, and CoC or designated CoC recipient agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

The following data points will be used to measure progress in the EHV program on a quarterly

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3. Number of new units under lease with an EHV (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
4. Race and ethnicity of EHV participants (data to be provided by Lead PHA EHV Liaison to the Lead CoC EHV Liaison)
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Signed and dated by the official representatives of the PHA and CoC,

Signed by:

Megan Basinger

Interim Executive Director City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority	Date
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Ben Leroi

Chair Sonoma County Continuum of Care	Date
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Proposed amendment to CES policy to allow for enrollment of individuals who do not meet category 1, 2 or 4 homeless to allow for access to EHV program

From CES policies

Participants: Individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of literal homelessness according to the federal definition of homelessness according to 24 CFR Parts 92, 582, and 583, the Homelessness Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act Final Rule Defining “Homeless,” **and** in need of permanent housing or emergency services. Participants must be located within the geography of Sonoma County (https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf).

Aspects of Coordinated Entry

Amendment for only the EHV: This policy has been amended to allow access to unstably housed individuals and families currently residing in Rapid Rehousing programs to the Emergency Housing Voucher Program. Unstably housed individuals and families currently residing in Rapid Rehousing programs are defined as those who are currently participating in a Rapid Rehousing program and who will likely not be able to maintain their housing and may return to homelessness once the subsidy ends.

In addition, this policy has been amended to allow access to individuals and families who are currently residing in Permanent Supportive Housing programs that can be served more appropriately through a direct referral to a voucher subsidy. These individuals and families must have met HUD’s definition of Chronic Homeless status, documented, prior to entry of the PSH program and are no longer requiring the intensive case management services paired with PSH programs.

Amendment for general uses: This policy has been amended to allow access to unstably housed individuals and families who do not meet the federal definition of homelessness to allow access to these individuals and families to programs that require CES participation but do not require participants to be homeless under categories 1,2 and 4. Unstably housed individuals are defined as those who are at a high risk of homelessness without on-going rental assistance. Examples include but are not limited to: individuals and families who are participating in a Rapid Rehousing program who would likely return to homelessness when a rental subsidy ends, individuals and families who are not participating in a rental assistance or homeless service program but lack the resources to maintain their housing without a rental subsidy or other intervention. Examples of programs that require CES participation but not the federal definition of literally homelessness: Emergency Housing Voucher program, Coordinated Entry Super Preference programs through the Sonoma County Housing Authority.