

# Emergency Housing Vouchers

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Sonoma County Housing Authority  
Santa Rosa Housing Authority



# Availability of EHV

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- The Housing Authorities have accepted an allocation of Emergency Housing Vouchers from HUD
- Funding for the Vouchers becomes available July 1, 2021
  - 153 EHV's provided to the Sonoma County Housing Authority
  - 131 EHV's provided to the Santa Rosa Housing Authority
- Operating requirements appear in PIH Notice 2021-15 dated May 5, 2021



# EHV – Broad Eligibility Categories

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- EHV eligibility is limited to individuals and families who are:
  - Homeless;
  - At risk of homelessness;
  - Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or
  - Recently homeless, and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.
- Referrals for EHV's must come through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry, and the CoC must determine how the resource is targeted



# Where can EHV be used?

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- Vouchers are tenant based, meaning that the voucher holder chooses where they will reside
- Vouchers may not be project based
- Vouchers may be used in hotel conversion projects provided that:
  - The voucher holder wishes to live there
  - The unit meets Housing Quality Standards (recommend preliminary HQS review for potential projects)
- Voucher holders may “port” their voucher out of Sonoma County if they choose
- Santa Rosa HA and Sonoma County HA have a cooperative agreement eliminating the need for portability between Santa Rosa and Sonoma County jurisdictions



# Collaboration with the Continuum of Care

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## How will the EHV's be targeted?

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- The PHAs and the CoC must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the administration of the EHV's by July 1, 2021 but no later than July 31, 2021
- The MOU must identify the specific population eligible for the EHV assistance that will be referred to the PHA by the CoC or other partnering referral agencies
- PHAs must accept referrals for EHV's directly from the CE System. Accepting direct referrals from the CE System will help ensure families are able to get assistance quickly and ensure that the family meets the regulatory definition of a qualifying individual or family for EHV assistance.



# Development of Recommendation

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- PHAs notified of funding awards on May 10, 2021
- Survey released week of May 10 (still open)
- Presentation to CoC Board May 26, 2021
- Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee meeting May 28, 2021
- EHV Work Group meeting June 2, 2021
- Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee meeting June 11, 2021



# Target Populations Being Considered by CoC

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- **30% to Chronically Homeless**
  - 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**
  - 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**
- **20% to homeless families or formerly homeless families participating in RRH and at risk of homelessness/housing instability**
- **5% to Survivors of Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking**
- **5% to Transitional Age Youth Experiencing Homelessness**



# When an applicant is referred

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- Service Providers will assist client in completing application and send a complete referral packet to the PHA
- The Housing Authority will work with both the service provider and the applicant to process the application and issue the EHV
- The referring agency must certify the applicant meets the definition of homeless and eligibility for the category under which the applicant is being referred



# Applicant Background Check – all adults

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## Mandatory Denials:

- Lifetime Sex-Offender Registrants
- Convicted of producing methamphetamine in federally assisted housing

## Housing Authority Discretionary Denials

- Violent criminal activity within the last 12 months
- Criminal activity that threatens the health safety of others within the last 12 months
- Engaged in or threats of abusive or violent behavior to PHA staff in the last 12 months



# Coordinating Service with CoC Providers

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The Memorandum of Understanding must outline the services to be provided to EHV families, one of which must be housing search assistance



# Housing Search Assistance Requirement

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Housing search assistance is a broad term which can include many activities, but with respect to this requirement it must at a minimum:

- (1) help individual families identify potentially available units during their housing search, including physically accessible units with features for family members with disabilities, as well as units in low-poverty neighborhoods,
- (2) provide transportation assistance and directions to potential units,
- (3) conduct owner outreach,
- (4) assist with the completion of rental applications and PHA forms, and
- (5) help expedite the EHV leasing process for the family



# Service Funding – PHA Resources

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- The EHV program includes service fee funds that may be used for:
  - Security Deposit/Utility Deposit/Rental Application/Holding Fees
  - Owner-related uses such as owner outreach, incentives
  - Other eligible uses including moving expenses (including move-in fees and deposits), tenant readiness, essential household items and renter's insurance
  - The PHA should only fund those services which are not duplicative or available through existing service providers



# Service Coordination for vouchers

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- Referrals for the chronically homeless and TAY will prioritize the ability to demonstrate eligibility for on-going case management services. This will include exploring options such as but not limited to:
  - Savings in housing expenses which can be applied to case management.
  - Medical case management.
  - Criminal justice programs.
  - Funding from the cities.
  - The Commons project in Santa Rosa.
  - ESG-CV funds.
  - Other development of homeless-targeted housing in Sonoma County.



# CEA Committee recommends

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- Approval of the target populations and service coordination requirements developed by the EHV work group and the CEA committee.



# Moving Forward

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- CoC adopts language for target population categories and supportive service requirements.
- CEA and working group of CEA, CDC and PHA staff determine referral process
- Memorandum of Understanding must be executed no later than July 31, 2021; HUD is strongly encouraging that it be signed by **July 1, 2021**
- Funds will be available to PHAs starting July 1
- Referrals can be made after July 1 and after MOU is executed