

City of Philadelphia
OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES



PREVENTION, DIVERSION & INTAKE UNIT
INTAKE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(INTERNAL)

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GOAL/MISSION

The mission of the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is to make homelessness rare, brief, and, non-recurring. The Prevention, Diversion & Intake Unit provides diversion services, homeless prevention, assessments and referrals, emergency housing eligibility determination and placement to individuals and families in need of emergency housing or financial assistance to maintain or obtain housing.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC) is committed to a service-delivery environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to live in an atmosphere that promotes equal treatment and opportunity and that prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices.

All programs must manage a responsible and sound operation in accordance with federal and local nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions, as codified in the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Titles II & III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, HUD's Equal Access rule: 24 CFR 5.100, 5.105(a)(2) and 5.106(b), and Philadelphia's Fair Practices Ordinance: Chapter 9-1100 of the Philadelphia Code.

This policy aims to ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of all individuals and families housed in programs associated with the Philadelphia CoC. All projects funded through HUD CoC Program or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program grants or receiving other funds from the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS) shall operate in accordance with this policy, following all applicable law. Programs must affirmatively provide equal access to their housing and supportive services in a nondiscriminatory manner that ensures that all persons are afforded equal opportunities.

Each provider must have a policy prohibiting discrimination against persons based on race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, age, source of income, familial status, or domestic or sexual violence victim status, ensuring that all participants are afforded equal opportunities, as stipulated in the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance and Federal Law and regulations.

HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Office of Homeless Services oversees the Philadelphia Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This data management system is used to collect information about persons and families experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness to provide them with housing and services to obtain and maintain housing stability.

Philadelphia’s HMIS is powered by Eccovia Solutions, Inc. (ClientTrack) with the following functionalities:

- Produce an unduplicated count of persons experiencing homelessness for each Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Describe the extent and nature of homelessness locally, regionally, and nationally
- Identify patterns of service use
- Measure program effectiveness to identify needs and gaps

Review FY 2020 HMIS Data Standards at <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelessservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf>

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Communication plays an essential role in providing information to participants faced with a housing crisis, and to stakeholders requesting participant or program data. Communication must be honest and consistent. How information is shared with participants and stakeholders is a direct reflection of the goal to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, but acknowledges the confidentiality of the nature of our work, and for the protection of participants, information will not be shared with third parties unless written consent is provided. Below is the established communication (phone, email, fax, text messaging) structure for staff:

Title	Communicate with or on behalf of participant:
Social Work Services Manager	Participant (Head of household), emergency housing provider staff, Department of Human Services staff, License and Inspections staff, Red Cross, utility companies and landlords. Family members not listed in household composition and friends for diversion and verification of homelessness purposes only.
Social Work Supervisor	Members of participants family listed/not listed in household composition in HMIS, emergency housing provider staff, friends of the participant, community organizations, advocates, City/State officials/agencies, utility companies, agencies requesting data and landlords.
Shelter Services Administrator	Members of participants family listed/not listed in household composition in HMIS, emergency housing provider staff, friends of the participant, community organizations, advocates, City/State officials/agencies, utility companies, agencies requesting data and landlords.

MANDATED REPORTER

Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse. Mandated reporters generally are

people who meet children as a part of their employment, practice of their profession and, sometimes, as volunteers in child-serving programs. The Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) was amended in 2013 and in 2014, including significant changes to the list of people who are mandated to report suspected child abuse (<https://www.pa-fsa.org/Mandated-Reporters/Understanding-Mandated-Reporting/Who-are-Mandated-Reporters> , retrieved July 7, 2020).

An employee or supervisor of a social services agency may have direct contact with children during their employment and are therefore considered mandated reporters. If an employee or supervisor suspects child abuse a report should be made by contacting the PA child line hotline at 1800-932-0313.

COVID-19 processes:

All participants entering intake sites will be required to use hand sanitizer and provided a mask if needed. Seating space in the waiting room area was reduced to promote physical distancing. Ten (10) participants are allowed in the waiting room space at Roosevelt Darby Center, and a total twenty (20) are allowed in the waiting room spaces at Appletree Family Center (ten in the designated single's waiting space and 10 in the designated family waiting space). Participant intake assessments will be completed remotely when possible. COVID-19 screening assessments must be completed for all participants requesting placement into emergency housing beds, and this information must be recorded in HMIS. A new HMIS COVID-19 assessment must be completed prior to submitting a referral in HMIS, and date from this new HMIS COVID-19 screening assessment must be entered into HMIS.

PREVENTION

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RESPONSE UNIT

The Emergency Assistance and Response Unit (EARU) addresses emergency housing needs of low-income Philadelphia residents by providing housing stabilization services and/or financial assistance. EARU addresses emergency housing needs resulting from natural disasters such as fires, floods, and cease operations due to unfit or imminently dangerous housing and/or housing that has been declared contaminated with lead poisoning or other chemical contamination by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

EARU provides short-term financial assistance and/or emergency response to assist Philadelphia residents to remain in their rental properties by preventing evictions due to rent delinquency. EARU provides counseling and assist participants in identifying alternate affordable housing. The amount of assistance a participant is eligible to receive is determined **on a case-by-case analysis of need**. The average amount of financial assistance EARU provides per household is approximately \$1,000; this average varies depending on the household needs and funding availability. Financial assistance is provided once per household in a twelve-month period, but additional assistance may be provided within a twelve-month period with approval from: OHS Director, Deputy Director, Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake or EARU Shelter Services Administrator.

HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Philadelphia Emergency Relocation Account (PERA) – General Funds

Participants receiving PERA assistance are eligible to receive a one-time payment for move-in costs (security deposit, first and last month's rent), rental and/or utility arrears. A participant's household monthly gross income must be at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (*FPL*) to receive this assistance.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

Participants receiving CSBG assistance are eligible to receive a one-time payment within 12 months for move-in costs (security deposit, first and last month's rent), rental and/or utility arrears. A participant's household monthly gross income must be at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level (*FPL*) to receive this assistance.

HOME

Participants receiving HOME assistance are eligible to receive a one-time payment for move-in costs (security deposit, first and last month's rent), and/or on-going rental assistance up to 12 months. A participant's household monthly gross income must be at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to receive this assistance. EARU staff provides housing stabilization services/case management to households receiving on-going rental assistance. EARU staff will provide the following services:

- Housing and case management supportive services, housing search counseling, educational support, financial planning, and assist with the overall coordination to increase housing retention.
- Assist participants in negotiating manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords.
- Make appropriate and time-limited referrals and supports available to participants to allow them to stabilize quickly in permanent housing.
- Monitor participants housing stability and be available to resolve crisis during the period financial assistance is provided.
- Provide or assist the participant with connections to resources that help them improve their safety and achieve their long-term goals. This includes providing or ensuring that each participant has access to resources related to benefits, employment and community-based services (if needed/appropriate) to sustain rent payments independently when rental assistance ends.

HOMELESS PREVENTION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Must be a resident of Philadelphia for a minimum of 30 days.
2. Must be 18 years of age or older; if under 18 participants must provide documentation of legal emancipation.
3. In need of rental assistance to retain current housing or obtain new housing to prevent homelessness.
4. Must provide (as applicable) a court ordered eviction notice, written notice from landlord to vacate the property, referral from Health Department cease operations/property declared unfit for human habitation, referral from License and Inspections cease operations/property declared unfit for human habitation, Red Cross or self-certification that household is fleeing domestic violence.
5. Meet the income eligibility guidelines. (*Household must have income capacity, i.e. potential for employment demonstrated by employment history, education, skill set or waiting for benefits to sustain housing, or moving into or preventing the eviction from subsidized housing if household has zero income*).
6. Eligibility criteria maybe waived with approval from one of the following: OHS Director, Deputy Director, Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake or EARU Shelter Services Administrator.

Program eligibility of employees of the City of Philadelphia or employees of contracted providers will be assessed on a case-by-case as needed basis.

HOMELESS PREVENTION REFERRAL/APPLICATION PROCESS

Depending on funding source, applicants may be required to provide the following documentation:

1. Photo ID for head of household members; birth certificates and social security cards for all household members.
2. Proof of income dated within the last 30 days for all household members.
3. Proof of Philadelphia residency.
4. Letter from landlord/agent identifying the unit address, monthly rent, total move in cost and contact information for the landlord/agent.
5. Statement from the landlord/agent of rent owed for delinquent rent, the number of months totaling the rent delinquency and/or move in costs. The statement must list the unit address, landlord/agent phone number and address if seeking assistance with delinquent rent if household is remaining in the unit.
6. Copy of signed residential lease for the property to be assisted (*Applicant must be listed as head of household on lease*).

7. Process requirements maybe waived with approval from one of the following staff: OHS Director Deputy Director, Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake or EARU Shelter Services Administrator.

Property owners must provide a copy of a valid rental license, certificate of rental suitability, W-9 form, lead certification (if children under 6 yrs. of age currently/will live in property) and all new assisted units must pass inspection and at minimum meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

HOMELESS PREVENTION PARTICIPANT CATEGORY/RISK VERIFICATION

EARU Staff administers services to Philadelphia households (individuals and families) in the following categories:

1. Eviction (*Must have court ordered eviction notice or written notice to vacate from landlord*).
2. Victims of domestic violence.
3. Rent delinquent residents of public housing (*or other subsidized housing programs*).
4. Displaced households due to housing declared by L&I as unfit for human habitation or imminently dangerous, collapsed properties due to serious structural defects or a cease operation (*Must have L&I referral*).
5. Displaced households due to housing declared by the city's Philadelphia Department of Public Health as unsafe due to lead poisoning or other chemical contaminations (*Must have a Philadelphia Department of Public Health referral*).
6. Displaced households due to housing severely damaged or destroyed by fire or other disasters (*Must have Red Cross referral*).
7. Displaced households not suitable for placement in emergency housing due to medical condition or family composition.

HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM PAYMENT PROCESS

The Fiscal department will process PERA and CSBG payment requests in a timely manner. There should not be an expectation that payments will occur upon receipt of the request. EARU staff is responsible for informing the Fiscal department of expedited payment requests. Issued checks must be presented to the appropriate signatories for their review. The Fiscal department will adhere to the following procedures to process PERA or CSBG payments:

1. The PERA or CSBG payment request will be time-stamped by the Fiscal department immediately upon receipt.
2. The PERA or CSBG payment request will be reviewed for completeness by the fiscal department. Incomplete payment requests will be returned to the originating Social Work Services Manager or

EARU's Shelter Services Administrator for completion:

- ✓ Document has appropriate signoffs. For a standard request:
Either
Supervisor of unit initiating the PERA/CSBG request and
EARU Shelter Services Administrator

OR

Supervisor of another unit and
EARU Shelter Services Administrator

OR

EARU Shelter Services Administrator
Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake

If complete, the Fiscal department will generate a check for the amount requested.

- ✓ If the request is submitted by noon, the check will be available by 4:00 PM the same day.
- ✓ If the request is submitted after 12:00 PM, the check will be available by noon of the next business day.

The Fiscal department will produce monthly reports and distribute them by the 15th of the following month to the Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake and EARU's Shelter Services Administrator.

Monthly reports will include:

- ✓ Total PERA and CSBG expenditures for the month and fiscal year-to-date.
- ✓ Expenditures for the month broken down by:
 - ✚ Reason for request, when unusual or requested – i.e. hotel expenditures for shelter overflow or other special projects
 - ✚ All payees, individually (landlord's sorter alphabetically).
 - ✚ All client, individually, sorted alphabetically by last name
- ✓ All checks cut for the month sorted by amount of check, from largest to smallest.
- ✓ Monthly PERA expenditures for all previous months in the current fiscal year.

Payment entries on all reports will include the category, date, check number, description of payment, recipient of payment, the client for whom the payment is made, and the amount of the payment.

SERVICE DAY

The objective of the Service Day is to encourage unsheltered homeless persons to accept appropriate housing and/or placement in drug, alcohol, or mental health treatment services through outreach engagement and discourage encampments on city streets and public areas. This operation dismantles and cleans homeless encampment sites. OHS coordinates the Service Day in conjunction with various city, state, and local non-profit agencies.

Service Day operations commence when a homeless encampment is identified and targeted for dismantling and clean up. An encampment is one or more structures in a public area set up to shelter person(s) who would otherwise be unsheltered, or an extensive fortified semi-permanent structure designed to shelter person(s) who would otherwise be homeless.

OHS staff will verify the existence of an encampment and assess the situation prior to scheduling a Service Day. The following occurs when OHS staff verifies an encampment site:

- OHS provides notice to the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities, Project HOME Outreach Coordination Center, and, based on the location of the encampment, the Service Day partner agencies that will perform the cleanup, i.e., Streets Department, Fairmount Park Commission, Penn DOT, SEPTA and the Philadelphia Police Department for safety concerns.
- Occupants of the encampment will receive a 48-hour written notice of the scheduled Service Day.
- The written notice informs the occupants of the encampment of the date and time of the Service Day, and that several agencies will be present to offer emergency housing options, connection to drug, alcohol, or mental health treatment services. The written notice informs encampment occupants to remove personal belongings prior to the Service Day and that staff will remove any remaining items during the cleanup.
- Prior to the Service Day, outreach staff will visit the site to encourage individuals to accept appropriate housing and/or treatment services.
- All agencies involved in the Service Day decide on a designated meeting spot and proceed as a group to the targeted area where they dismantle and clean up the site while OHS staff engages and informs individuals about available services.

DIVERSION

What is Diversion

A strategy that prevents homelessness by helping people experiencing a housing crisis **and seeking emergency housing** to preserve their current housing situation or make immediate alternative arrangements **without having to enter emergency housing.**

Reasons to use prevention resources at the front door of emergency housing

- Helps people avoid trauma of an emergency housing stay by connecting them with safe alternatives
- Improves system outcomes by reducing entries into homelessness
- Improves quality of life by helping people avoid the stress of emergency housing stays
- Conserves and targets resources – emergency housing beds used only when needed
- Cuts down on emergency housing wait lists
- Instead of immediate intake, engages clients in a conversation and identifies safe alternatives to emergency housing
- Assists in connecting participants to community resources to avoid an emergency housing stay

DIVERSION PROGRAM/PROCESS

Staff will attempt to divert all participants requesting placement into emergency housing. The diversion process attempts to help participants avoid the trauma associated with emergency housing stays by immediately connecting them with safe alternative housing options. Staff may ask each participant questions to illicit responses that may assist the participant in identifying support/alternative housing options (examples):

1. When things were going better in your life, what was different?
2. What services would you need to prevent you from entering the emergency housing system?
3. What is your expectation of emergency housing?
4. Due to space limitations in our emergency housing system, in the past who did you live with and who can you live with them now safely?
5. If you have been in a shelter/housing program before, what happened that caused you to return to emergency housing, how will this time be different for you?

Based on responses, and when appropriate, staff should attempt to connect the participant to community resources to avoid emergency housing placement. Staff should refer the participant to homeless prevention program in cases where financial assistance is needed to successfully divert the participant.

The participant will be offered the option to complete an emergency housing intake if he/she is unsuccessful in identifying alternative housing options

INTAKE

CENTRALIZED INTAKE

The centralized intake system covers the City of Philadelphia. Intake services are accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days/year. Information detailing the centralized intake system is available on the City's website (www.phila.gov) and 311 and 211 phone systems. The primary purpose of the centralized intake system is to assess the household's immediate housing crisis, divert and provide prevention services when possible, or provide emergency housing placement if available for those who cannot be safely diverted.

STRANDED TRAVELER ASSISTANCE

Stranded traveler assistance requests are generated by Social Work Services Manager at Appletree Family Center (AFC) or Roosevelt Darby Center (RDC). Participants requesting Stranded Traveler assistance must provide the following required information: name, social security number, and number of adults and/or children. The following information will be obtained, verified, and entered on the designated Greyhound Commercial Sales form by the Social Work Services Manager requesting the stranded traveler ticket:

Passenger Name	Service From
Service To	Departure Date
Departure Time	Memo (use this section to add additional passenger names)

The Social Work Services Manager requesting the Stranded Traveler assistance will email the completed Greyhound Commercial Sales form to a supervisor for approval. Once the Stranded Traveler request is approved, the Social Work Supervisor will email the Greyhound Commercial Sales form to the following OHS staff:

Accountant trainee (TBD)	Budget Officer (Ginyard)
Fiscal Office (Curran - copy)	Director, PD&I (Johnson – copy)
AFC Administrator (Spearman: copy – Families & single women only)	
RDC Administrator (Ricci: copy – Single men only)	
<i>Service Representative or Clerical Supervisor will give the bus ticket/voucher to the participant</i>	

The Fiscal department will process the Stranded Traveler request. Upon receiving approval from Greyhound, the Fiscal department will email the Stranded Traveler authorization information and/or documentation to the Social Work Supervisor. The participant is responsible for taking the authorization form to Greyhound on the listed departure date on the form for travel to their requested destination.

Greyhound luggage policy: One (1) bag checked free + one (1) small bag allowed per person. Approval from OHS Fiscal department is required if participant is traveling with additional bags/luggage.

INTAKE POLICY

The intake unit serves participants presenting at the “front door” for homeless services. The homeless status of each household will be confirmed through our verification process. Participants placed into emergency housing must follow guidelines outlined in the Emergency Housing Standards policy.

INTAKE PROCESS

A. INITIAL CONTACT

1. The Service Representative will enter participant data into HMIS and complete the intake log sheet with the computer-generated case number and participant demographics, i.e., name, birth date, social security number, family composition, race, etc.

2. The Service Representative will request proof of identification and, if applicable, proof of guardianship of minor children, when each household presents at the intake site.

However, no household will be denied emergency housing placement because he or she does not have identification or proof of guardianship.

3. The Social Work Services Manager will attempt to divert all households from entering emergency housing. The Social Work Services Manager will ascertain if the participant has the financial ability to pay for alternative housing (hotel or motel room) for the night. If the participant is unable to pay for a hotel or motel room, the Social Work Services Manager in conjunction with the participant, will contact the participants relatives and/or friends to determine if the participant can reside with them.
4. Homeless Prevention: When possible, households will be referred to other suitable resources within OHS or community to explore housing options other than emergency housing placement.
5. Participants requiring a behavioral health evaluation: Social Work Services Managers at AFC can refer participants to the on-site Crisis Specialist if:
 - Behaviors (such as, but not limited to physical violence towards self or others, sexual violence, terroristic threats, destruction of property and persistent verbal abuse) exhibited in intake office or documented in HMIS by emergency housing staff. Participants displaying inappropriate behaviors may be asked to leave and return to complete their intake in 24 hours if the behavior prevents or interferes with the completion of theirs or any participant's intake.

Intake staff must complete an incident report, notify security staff, and contact the Police Department when a participant exhibit behavior (physical violence, sexual violence, terroristic threats or destruction of property) towards another participant or staff. Intake staff must document each incident in the notes section of the participant's case record/file in HMIS.

- Recent discharge from psychiatric hospital or mental health residence (low demand facility, CRR, etc.).
6. Participants with disabilities: Most people with disabilities are not medically fragile and do not require assistance to live or reside in emergency housing. OHS will attempt to accommodate people with disabilities in the most appropriate setting according to their needs. Some people with disabilities use personal care assistants for activities of daily living, such as eating, dressing, routine health care and personal hygiene needs. Participants requiring personal care assistance are eligible to be placed in emergency housing. OHS will verify the personal care

services need of each participant prior to determining if an appropriate setting is available to accommodate the placement request.

Placing participants that are required to use oxygen concentrators to breathe in a private room would be a reasonable accommodation. Staff must confirm the availability of a private room with the emergency housing site prior to submitting the placement referral in HMIS. A participant with an oxygen tank will not be allowed to enter emergency housing. Participants with an oxygen concentrator will be allow entry into emergency housing.

7. Referrals by Police: Staff will request a copy of the police report (or DC#) when a participant is escorted to the intake unit by a police officer. This report should indicate where the participant was picked up, time, and any other pertinent information (when possible), e.g. participant medical and mental status, or if participant is taking medications. Staff may request the Police transport the participant to the nearest hospital for evaluation prior to completing an assessment for emergency housing placement.
8. Referrals from Hospitals: Hospitals are required to call the OHS External Agency Referral (EAR) line (215-686-5671) and fax numbers (215-685-3728 or 3729) to make a referral for emergency housing placement. Referred participants requiring medical supervision will be diverted to the appropriate care setting (personal care, nursing home, hospital) to meet their needs. The OHS External Agency Referral line is monitored by staff from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. After 5:00 PM and weekends/city holidays, all referrals are to be made directly to the appropriate after-hours facility:

Families: Salvation Army, 715 N. Broad Street, 215-787-2887

Single Men: Station House, 2601 N. Broad Street, 215-225-9230

Single Women: House of Passage, 48th Street between Market Street and Haverford Avenue, 267-713-7778

Staff will attempt to divert all participants requiring medical supervision to an appropriate setting to meet their needs.

9. Referrals from the Department of Human Services (DHS): When a participant presents at intake accompanied by a DHS/CUA worker, staff will give the DHS worker an OHS/DHS referral form to complete. The referral form will be forwarded to the Director, Prevention, Diversion and Intake, and used by the Social Work Services Manager if DHS assistance is needed in placing the household into emergency housing. The Social Work Services Manager informs the DHS/CUA worker that the participant seeking emergency housing may not receive placement immediately and may need to find alternative housing until placement is identified. The Social Work Services Manager will ask the DHS/CUA worker if a DHS housing plan was created. Once OHS has identified emergency housing for a participant, staff will contact the DHS/CUA worker to inform them where the family is being placed.

10. Fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence: If the participant or household indicates they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, staff will make an immediate referral to the on-site domestic violence specialist (at AFC only). The domestic violence specialist will complete a lethality assessment and safety plan with the participant and request an emergency housing placement, if appropriate, that will meet the safety needs of the participant. Staff will provide the participant the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline phone number (1-866-723-3014).
11. Participants not assessed during regular business hours are eligible to stay at our after-hours intake sites (based on bed/room availability) and return to AFC or RDC during regular business hours to have their intake completed.

Interpreter services:

Interpreter service is available for participants who are hearing impaired. The Service Representative on duty will contact the Social Work Supervisor with the participant's name and date of birth who needs the interpretation services. The Social Work Supervisor will contact the Interpreter Line at 610-604-0454 to request an appointment within 48 hours. The Social Work Supervisor will provide the service representative with the appointment details for the participant to return. Once the SWS receives email confirmation of the appointment the Social Work Supervisor will forward the email to Social Work Supervisor, Administrator, Service representative, and clerical supervisor notifying them of the appointment.

Service restriction policy:

The Prevention, Diversion and Intake department will attempt to assist all participants requesting emergency housing services. Service restrictions may be justified in cases where a participant's presence or inappropriate behavior interferes with the safety and well-being of other participants, staff, or the site itself. Staff can request to restrict a participant from receiving services up to 30-days for the following behaviors displayed at intake or documented in HMIS:

- Actual or threatened physical violence towards participants or staff
- Actual or threatened sexual violence towards participants or staff
- Terroristic threats towards participants or staff
- Possession of an illegal weapon
- Destruction of property
- Persistent verbal abuse towards participants or staff
- Refusing security searches
- Violent/physical gestures towards participants or staff (demonstration: shooting motion with fingers/hand, a hitting motion with a closed fist, throat cutting motion with finger/hand)
- Open arrest warrants
- Drug usage in the intake facility
- Repeated Health and Safety discharges (documented in HMIS)

Social Work Services Manager staff can issue a 24-hour service restriction with the approval of their Social Work Supervisor. Service restrictions for more than 24-hours must be approved by the Social Work Supervisor and Shelter Services Administrator. In these cases, the Social Work Services Manager must notify the Social Work Supervisor and security guard of the issue.

The Social Work Services Manager and security guard must complete an incident report. Both incident reports will be provided to the Social Work Supervisor and/or Shelter Services Administrator for review and service restriction determination. The Social Work Supervisor and/or Shelter Services Administrator will notify the Director, Prevention, Diversion & Intake within 24-hours of determining to restrict services to a participant for more than 24-hours.

B. SOCIAL WORK SERVICES MANAGER INTERVIEW

1. Verification of Homelessness: As part of HUD's required Declaration of Homelessness process, intake staff will determine if the participant is eligible for services and meets the federal definition of homelessness. HUD's definition of homelessness is as follows:
 - Literally Homeless: individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
 - Imminent Risk of Homelessness: individual or family who will imminently lose their primary residence within 14 days of their application for homeless assistance
 - Homeless under other Federal statutes
 - Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence

Staff is required to request various acceptable forms of homelessness verification during the intake process. This process involves a variety of forms of documentation. The order of priority for obtaining evidence of homelessness is:

1. Third-party documentation
2. Outreach worker observations
3. Self-certification/Self-declaration of homelessness

Participants without documentation are still assessed and eligibility is determined. The lack of third-party documentation will not prevent a participant from being placed into emergency housing.

2. Third-party Documentation

Forms of third-party documentation can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Court-ordered eviction notices, mortgage foreclosure documentation, property tax delinquency documents or sheriff sale letters.

- b. Red Cross Referral. Documentation from Red Cross documenting the household received assistance. If the participant does not have documentation from Red Cross, the Social Work Services Manager can contact Red Cross for verification.
- c. Licenses and Inspections (L&I) documentation. If the household does not have documentation from L&I, the Social Work Services Manager can contact L&I to obtain verification.
- d. Utility Shut-off notices. If the participant does not have any documentation, the Social Work Services Manager can contact the utility company for verification.
- e. Domestic Violence documentation from a domestic violence shelter. The referring domestic violence shelter will provide the participant written documentation verifying current residence in their shelter. If the participant does not have documentation, the Social Work Manager can contact the domestic violence shelter for verification.

If the participant was not previously residing at a domestic violence shelter but is fleeing domestic violence, the participant may have a protection from abuse order or a police report which the Social Work Services Manager will accept as proof. If the participant has no such documentation, the Social Work Services Manager will refer the participant to the on-site domestic violence specialist (at AFC only). In conjunction with the participant, the on-site domestic violence specialist will complete a lethality assessment, a safety plan, and request an emergency housing placement if appropriate to meet the safety needs of the participant.

- f. Documentation from a family member, friend or acquaintance with whom the participant previously lived with. Each participant indicating, they resided with a family member, friend or acquaintance, but can no longer stay with that person is requested to provide the contact information of the person they resided with. The Social Work Services Manager will attempt to verify this information by telephone, email, or text. If the Social Work Services Manager is unable to make contact by phone or if the participant reports the person does not have a phone, the Social Work Services Manager will provide the household with a prior residence verification letter. The Social Work Services Manager will ask the participant to have the person whom they resided with complete and return the form to the Social Work Services Manager.

C. OUTREACH WORKER OBSERVATION

The City of Philadelphia coordinates street outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness through the Outreach Coordination Center (OCC), located at Project HOME, and in collaboration

with local nonprofit organizations. City-wide street outreach efforts include a 24-hour, 365-day hotline (215-232-1984) and dispatch to ensure there is an outreach presence on the streets. Street outreach teams locate and engage individuals and encourage them to accept services, treatment, and housing. When the street outreach team engages an individual, who expresses interest in emergency housing, the street outreach team transports the individual to an intake site.

Self-certification/Self-declaration of homelessness

1. All participants seeking emergency housing assistance must complete a Declaration of Homelessness Form. This form documents the participant's most recent episode of homelessness indicating that the participant:
 - is unable to stay where they had previously resided;
 - has not identified a subsequent residence; and
 - household lacks the resources and support networks necessary to obtain other permanent housing.

The Declaration of Homelessness form is signed by the head of household and Social Work Services Manager.

2. To help in assessing a participant's needs, the Social Work Services Manager will collect and record information about the presenting problems which led to homelessness. The problem or conditions will include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Individual/family psychological/mental health condition
 - b. Individual/family physical/medical condition
 - c. Individual/family financial condition or status
 - d. Individual/family environmental/social condition
3. The Social Work Services Manager may request proof of identification for each household member (birth certificates, social security cards, MA/Medical ID cards, etc.) and income verification for each household member (SSI, DPA/AFDC, employment, child support, etc.). ***However, no participant will be denied placement into emergency housing because he or she does not have identification or proof of income.***
4. If a participant indicates they have DHS involvement, the Social Work Services Manager will request the name and contact number of the DHS/CUA worker. If the participant does not know the name or contact number of their DHS/CUA worker, the Social Work Services Manager can contact the DHS Customer Response Line for the information. The Social Work Services Manager communicates with DHS/CUA worker, explaining the participant seeking emergency housing may not receive placement immediately and may need to find alternative housing until a placement is obtained. The Social Work Services Manager will ask the DHS/CUA worker if DHS has a housing plan in place for the participant. The Social Work Services Manager will discuss any concerns and possible services the participant may need.

5. The Social Work Services Manager will ask the participant to sign the HMIS agreement form and make required entries into the HMIS. HMIS will be updated to indicate any new information applicable to the household (e.g. address, family composition, etc.).

EMERGENCY HOUSING PLACEMENT

1. Social Work Services Manager staff will search for an appropriate emergency housing placement facility for all eligible households.
2. In cases where an emergency housing placement is made for a disabled participant or family member, the Social Work Services Manager will ensure the emergency housing site is accessible to people with disabilities.
3. Each day intake staff will review vacancy listings provided by emergency housing provider staff. Intake staff will refer to this list to place a participant into vacant emergency housing beds. A referral is then made in HMIS to the appropriate facility.

****Bunk-bed policy: Only children ages six (6) or older can sleep on top bunks.***

If needed, transportation to the emergency housing facility may be provided to the household in the form of tokens/passes to ride public transportation or staff transporting the household via an authorized transport vehicle. All participants will be given 24-hours to report to the emergency housing facility.

4. The daily activity of “close down” is to track participants presenting at intake who were not assessed by a Social Work Services Manager but still require emergency housing placement. Social Work Services Manager or Social Work Supervisor staff will inform each participant that placement into emergency housing is not guaranteed. Participants with nowhere to reside for the night will be provided information about after-hours sites.

Pack-n-Play policy:

Children newborn to under two (2) years of age are required to sleep in a pack n play or crib. AFC through a partnership with the Maternity Care Coalition will provide a new pack n play to a family placed long term in emergency housing that has child/children younger than two years of age. Once placement has been identified the SWSM must email SWS Keisha Moore- Johnson and Jomo Brown the HOHs name and DOB, DOB of the child receiving the pack n play, the name of the shelter the family is placed, and whether the family has been involved with DHS within the last five (5) years. If available, Jomo Brown will deliver the pack n play to the identified placement site. Families will also have the option to take an OHS issued pack n play to shelter with them if they are able to transport it on their own.

PROCEDURE FOR PLACEMENT OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

Process for families without children (single adults):

1. All participants and/or persons 18 years and above, requesting emergency housing placement will be asked if they have been convicted of a crime that is categorized as a sex offense on the Megan's Law Website.
2. As part of the intake process, Social Work Services Manager staff will check the Megan's Law website to verify if the participant is registered on the website. Once it is determined that a participant is a Lifetime/25/15-Year Registrant the following placement process will be implemented:

Tier III - Lifetime Registrants:

1. Participants registered under the category of Lifetime Registration will not be placed in any emergency housing site where there is a senior citizen center, nursing home, day care center, or other children's services.
2. Lifetime registrants will be referred to EARU for prevention assistance or placed at an emergency housing site where it is permissible for accommodation within the OHS families without children (single adult) system.

Tier II – 25 Year Registrants:

1. Participants registered under the category of 25-Year Registration will not be placed in any emergency housing site where there is a senior citizen center, nursing home, day care center, or other children's services.
2. 25-Year Registrants will be placed at emergency housing sites where it is permissible accommodation within the OHS families without children (single adult) system.

Tier I – 15 Year Registrants:

1. Participants registered under the category of 15-Year Registration will not be placed in any emergency housing site where there is a senior citizen center, nursing home, day care center, or other children's services.
2. 15-Year Registrants will be placed at emergency housing sites where it is permissible accommodation within the OHS families without children (single adult) system

Process for Adults with Children:

1. All participants and/or persons 18 years and above requesting emergency housing placement will be asked if they were convicted for a crime that is categorized as a sex offense on the Megan's Law website.

2. Social Work Services Manager staff will check the Megan’s Law website to verify if the participant, or adult family member, is registered on the website. If it’s determined that any adult in the household is a Lifetime/25/15-Year Registrant, the following process will be implemented:

Lifetime/25/15 Year Registrants

1. Any participant with children who has been confirmed as a Lifetime/25/15 Year Registrants will not be placed in any emergency housing program that families with children
2. Intake staff will refer these participants to EARU for homeless prevention services.

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

The following is guidance from City Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding service animals in shelters:

The ADA applies to all programs, services, or activities of public entities including local governments by protecting the rights of people who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits their ability to perform one or more major life activities. In this manner, the ADA attempts to provide equal treatment to persons with disabilities so that they will not be treated in a different or inferior manner. The ADA’s desire for equal treatment, reasonable modifications may be made to existing services when necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities.

With respect to the use of service animals, the ADA requires the animal be under the handler’s control always using a tether, leash, or harness unless the use of those devices impede the work of the service animal or the individual’s disability prevents the “safe and effective performance of work or tasks” when implementing those devices.

When those devices are unable to be used, voice, signal, or other effective methods must be used to maintain control of the service animal. Notwithstanding the permissive use of service animals, they may be excluded from a facility for two reasons. First, the service animal may be excluded if the service animal is “out of control” and the handler is unable to regain control of the service animal. Second, the service animal may be excluded if the service animal is not housebroken. If the service animal is excluded, the individual will still be entitled “to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.”

OHS may ask two questions of the service animal’s handler: whether the service animal is required because of a disability and what work tasks has the service animal been trained to perform. Questions about the extent or nature of the person’s disability are not permitted under the ADA guidelines although they may be pertinent and permissible to meet HUD HMIS requirements.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

The Office of Homeless Services will attempt to provide safe and reliable transportation options to participants in a safe, respectful, and fiscally responsible manner.

Bus/rail eligibility:

Participants and their family members are eligible to receive transportation passes/tokens under the following conditions:

Participants/households with zero monthly income -

Appletree Family Center (families):

- Family accepts emergency housing placement.
- Transportation to after-hours site (Salvation Army Red Shield): Per Social Work Service Manager approval after assessment.

Appletree Family Center (singles):

- Participant accepts emergency housing placement.
- Transportation to after-hours site (House of Passage) – Maximum of three (3) passes per week.

Roosevelt Darby Center:

- Participant accepts emergency housing placement at Outley House or Fernwood West.

Participants/households that earns/receives monthly income:

Participants will be responsible for providing transportation for their household during the 1st and 2nd week of each month.

Appletree Family Center (families):

- Family accepts emergency housing placement (3rd and 4th week of each month only).
- Transportation to after-hours site (Salvation Army Red Shield): Per Social Work Service Manager approval after assessment (3rd and 4th week of each month only).

Appletree Family Center (singles):

- Participant accepts emergency housing placement (3rd and 4th week of each month only).
- Transportation to after-hours site (House of Passage): 3rd and 4th week of each month only and a maximum of three (3) passes per week.

Roosevelt Darby Center:

- Participant accepts emergency housing placement at Outley House and Fernwood West (3rd and 4th week of each month only).

City vehicle usage:

This document sets forth policies and procedures governing vehicle usage, assignment, parking and other vehicle management related issues.

Individual responsibilities:

- Drivers and all passengers must wear seat belts always when the vehicle is in motion.
- Employees must comply with applicable state and local driving laws, parking regulations, and City safety policies.
- Employees must drive according to road conditions especially during inclement weather
- Employees are personally responsible and liable for any citations and/or violations received while operating a City vehicle.
- For employees required to drive or maintain a valid driver's license as part of their official duties, driving record convictions may be considered as grounds for disciplinary actions up to and including termination whether infractions occurred while conducting City business or outside of work. Employees are required to immediately report to their supervisors and the departmental fleet coordinator any tickets or citations for stationary or moving violations received while operating a vehicle for City business.
- Employees must notify their immediate supervisor(s) within 24 hours of receiving notice that their license will be revoked or suspended.
- Drivers shall not operate City or personal vehicle for City business when they are required to take medication which may impair their ability to safely operate a moving vehicle.
- Employees are required to use hands-free cell phone devices while operating City vehicles. Otherwise, NO cell phone use (phone, text, data, etc.) is permitted while the vehicle is in operation.
- Under no circumstances will any employee purchase, carry, or imbibe any form of alcohol or controlled drug substance.
- Employees must return vehicles to the appropriate parking garage, lot, or street location.
- Vehicles must be returned with at least ½ tank of gas.
- Smoking is not allowed in City vehicles

General guidelines for using City vehicles:

- City vehicles are municipal property that should be used for official City business.
- Employees may not use vehicles assigned while off-duty except for work-related activities.
- Transportation of Non-City employees: A City vehicle can be used to transport non-City individuals (those who are not City employees) if the transport is for business purposes (but are not limited to the below list):

✓ To and from intake sites to emergency housing sites

- ✓ Rehabilitation centers
 - ✓ Hospitals
 - ✓ Service day locations
 - ✓ Encampments
 - ✓ Emergency response (Assist License and Inspections department, weather related, natural disasters, etc.)
 - ✓ Stranded traveler assistance – transport to bus or rail station
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- Vehicle security: Unattended vehicles must be locked always.
Unattended vehicles must not have a key in the ignition.
 - Travel outside of Philadelphia city limits: City vehicles should not be taken outside City limits without electronic or written authorization from one of the following - OHS Director, Chief of Staff, Deputy Director or Director, Prevention, Diversion and Intake. All travel outside the City limits must be for legitimate business purposes.
 - Employees must report any crash in a City vehicle immediately to their supervisors, departmental fleet coordinator, and human resources department.