

**Foundations Program  
Written Policies and Procedures  
Updated February 2022**

**PROGRAMMATIC**

**Eligibility**

To be considered for the Foundations Program, a family must utilize the Dane County Coordinated Entry system via the priority list. Eligibility criteria to be used for entry into the Foundations Program are 1) homeless status and 2) disability. At no time shall a family be screened out of the program for any of the following:

- income (no income or too little, or changes in income over program participation)
- substance use (active use or history of use)
- criminal background
- history of domestic violence

Additional criteria includes:

1. Family with at least one adult and one minor child in the household.
2. As a Dedicated project, the program must serve families in which one adult or child has a documented disability.
3. Families must meet the HUD definition for Dedicated Projects at project entry, as defined by the following:
  - a. Experiencing chronic\* homelessness as defined by HUD (1) An individual who: (i) Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and (ii) Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years; and (iii) Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability;
  - b. Residing in a transitional housing project that will be eliminated and meets the definition of chronically homeless in effect at the time in which the individual or family entered the transitional housing project;
  - c. Residing in a place not meant for human habitation, emergency shelter, or safe haven; but the individuals or families experiencing chronic homelessness as defined at 24 CFR 578.3

\*Chronically homeless means: (1) A "homeless individual with a disability," as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who: (i) Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and (ii) Has been homeless and living as described in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described in paragraph (1)(i). Stays in institutional care facilities for fewer than 90 days will not constitute as a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the 12-month total, as long as the individual was living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility; (2) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or (3) A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

had been admitted and enrolled in a permanent housing project within the last year and were unable to maintain a housing placement;

d. Residing in transitional housing funded by a Joint transitional housing (TH) and rapid re-housing (PH-RRH) component project and who were experiencing chronic homelessness as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 prior to entering the project;

e. Receiving assistance through a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)-funded homeless assistance program and met one of the above criteria at initial intake to the VA's homeless assistance system.

### **Additional Eligibility Rules**

We do not discriminate against households due to disability, religion, a religious belief, age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other identifying characteristic.

Family members are able to retain appropriate assistance after the death, incarceration or institutionalization for more than 90 days of qualifying household members. Members of any household who were living in a unit assisted under this part at the time of the qualifying member's death, long-term incarceration, or long-term institutionalization, have the right to rental assistance under this section until the expiration of the lease in effect at the time of the qualifying member's death, long-term incarceration, or long-term institutionalization. *24 CFR 578.75 (h)(i)*

Families with children under the age of 18 will not be denied admission or separated when entering housing. *24 CFR 578.93 (e)*

### **Documentation Requirements**

Program participant files must contain documentation of the family's homelessness and disability. Each category of homelessness requires specific written documentation. Please see below for what is required for each category and the order or priority for documentation.

#### *Homeless Verification:*

##### *Category 1.1(place not meant for human habitation) and 1.2 (shelter)*

1. A written referral by another housing or service provider.
2. A printed record from HMIS or a comparable database used by a victim service or legal service provider.
3. A written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the family was living.
4. A written certification of the head of household seeking assistance.

*Category 1.3 (institution)*

1. Discharge paperwork, written or oral referral from social worker, case manager or other appropriate staff of the institution that states the beginning and end dates of stay.
2. A written record of attempting to obtain the information above and a written self-certification from the head of household seeking services that they are exiting an institution where they resided for 90 days or less.

\*In order to meet the criteria for Category 1.3, there must be documentation that the head of household met Category 1.1 or 1.2 definition of homelessness prior to entrance to the institution. (See documentation requirements above.)

*Category 4*

1. If the family was served by a victim service provider:
  - a. Documentation of the family's oral statement that the family was fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking or other dangerous or life threatening conditions that relate to violence.
  - b. Lacked the resources or support networks necessary to obtain other permanent housing.
  - c. Had not identified other subsequent housing
2. If the family was served by an organization other than a victim service provider, documentation must include the 3 points above AND
  - a. Written certification by the head of household that the statement is true and completed AND
  - b. Written observation of the worker or a written referral by a housing or service provider, legal assistance provider, social worker, health care provider, law enforcement agency, pastoral counselor, or any other organization from whom the program participant had sought assistance for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

\*documentation should include the minimum information needed to satisfy the requirement, do NOT obtain documentation if it puts the family's safety at risk.

*Disability Verification:*

1. Proof of SSI or SSDI award letter or written disability verification form completed and signed by a medical provider.
2. Disability Verification Waiver Clause. Participants who use a waiver for disability verification must obtain documented proof of disability within 45 days of enrolling in the

program. Failure to provide documented proof of disability will result in losing eligibility in the program and termination.

### **Rent Payments**

In accordance with 24 CFR 578.49(b)(2), CoC Program leasing funds are used to pay rent for individual housing units, the rent paid must be reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable units, taking into account the location, size, type, quality, amenities, facilities, and management services. Program participants pay 30% of their adjusted gross income in rent to The Road Home of Dane County. Program staff must document income of households in the following way:

1. Income form completed by program staff at least annually, with appropriate documentation, such as:
  - a. Source documentation of assets and/or deductions (i.e. SSI Award letter, employment verification, paystubs [4 -6 consecutive pay stubs]).
  - b. If source documentation unavailable, written statement by third party, or;
  - c. Oral verification (initiated by program staff) of relevant third party income received over the most recent 3 month period, documented by staff in file (i.e. paystubs, verbal communication with employer).
  - d. If source documents and 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification are unavailable, written certification of program participant income expected to receive in the next 3 months, along with written explanation of why 3rd party verification could not be obtained.
  - e. If the participant does not have any income, they will fill out a Zero Income Verification form, located on the HSC website.
2. All 3rd party documentation must be dated within 120 days of income verification performed by program staff (i.e. SSI Award letter must be dated within 120 of initial or annual income assessment).
3. Utility Allowance for participants will be calculated at move-in and will be re-calculated each time program rent amount is re-calculated. The monthly utility allowance for utilities that is established by the CDA-Section 8 must be included in the calculation.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Participants will receive a program file that will include a contract outlining their rights and responsibilities. Participants will be required to sign the contract.

### **Grievance Procedure for the Foundations Program (The Road Home)**

If a program participant has a concern with The Road Home staff or volunteer, the following grievance procedure should be used:

1. If comfortable, discuss the concern with your case manager.

2. If you are unable to discuss the concern with your case manager, or are unable to come to a resolution, express your concern verbally or in writing to the housing manager. The housing manager will discuss the concern with you and with the staff member involved to determine a resolution.
3. If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if you have a concern about the housing manager, you may express your concern verbally or in writing to the program director. The program director will discuss the concern with you and with the staff member involved to determine a resolution.
4. If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if you have a concern about the program director, you may express your concern verbally or in writing to the executive director. The executive director will discuss the concern with you and with the staff member involved to determine a resolution.
5. If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if you have a concern about the executive director, you may put your concern in writing to the President of the Board of Directors. If he/she is not available, it will go to the Vice President. Any staff member will forward the letter to the appropriate board member. A board member will make a final decision about how the matter will be resolved and mail the response to the participant.

At entry program participants will be given a paper copy of the grievance procedure and informed that the grievance policy is on the agency website

### **Termination Process**

Terminating a family's assistance from the Foundations Program should only occur in rare and severe cases. A decision to terminate assistance shall never be made based on a participant's income (loss of income or failure to increase income), failure to participate in supportive services, failure to make progress on a service plan or due to being a victim of domestic violence. Case Manager, Coordinator, and Program Housing Manager at The Road Home must have a discussion before making a decision to terminate assistance. All possible alternatives must be explored before terminating assistance.

If it has been decided that termination is the only option, use the following process:

1. Families will be referred to the Coordinated Entry Program Manager for a program transfer.
2. Provide program participants a letter indicating termination of assistance that states the reason for termination, including facts, sources of the facts, the right to review their file, and evidence on which the decision is based. Provide a copy of the program contract with sections highlighted that are relevant to the decision. In addition, provide a copy of the grievance procedure.

3. Participants can request and will have the right to have the case reviewed by staff that did not make the decision to terminate assistance. Participants may present their objections orally or in writing.
4. When a participant completes the review process staff will provide written notice of the final decision to the program participant.

### **Housing Location Process**

- Program staff will work participants on housing location. Program staff will take into consideration where children attend school or daycare, location of employment, access to transportation, and other family needs.
- Program staff will follow CDA's policy when assigning a number of bedrooms to households.
- Once a referral is received from coordinated entry, program coordinator will do their due diligence to get in contact with the family and make at least 3 contact attempts over the course of 7 business days before moving onto another referral; these attempts will be documented in HMIS. Program Coordinator will make sure to exhaust other avenues such as contacting school social workers and any other case managers or outreach workers who may have contact with referral.
- At enrollment in the program, program participants will complete a housing search contract with the program coordinator. Participants will have 90 days from enrollment to complete housing search. If after 90 days they are not able to find housing, the participant is able to ask for one 30 day extension at which point the coordinator will review and make a determination whether participants will be granted additional housing search time or re-referred to coordinated entry. At the 120 day mark family will get re-referred to coordinated entry if housing has not been secured.
- Prior to lease signing, all units will need to pass an inspection using a Housing Habitability Standards Inspection Checklist which meets the Housing Quality Standards requirement.
- Rents may not exceed rents currently being charged for comparable units, and the rent paid may not exceed HUD-determined fair market rents.

### **Lease/sub-lease**

The Road Home of Dane County needs to sign the lease due to receiving Leasing dollars from HUD. When The Road Home of Dane County is listed as a tenant and signs the lease, a sub-lease should be put in place between The Road Home of Dane County and the program participant. The sub-lease must be re-signed annually. The initial lease needs to be for a period of at least

one year and are renewable for a minimum term of one month and terminable only for cause.

### **Voluntary Services**

Program participants will all be offered case management services, but will not be required to participate. Case management staff must offer participants a wide array of services. These may include, but are not limited to: developing an individualized housing/service plan, assistance with obtaining and maintaining housing, counseling, employment referrals, education, referral and coordination of services, accessing mainstream benefits, and coordinating with schools. If a participant declines services, program staff must continue to reach out to the participant to attempt engagement with them. At no time shall a participant be terminated from the Foundations Program for failure to participate in supportive services or failure to make progress on a service plan.

In addition to the broadly defined services provided by the program, case manager will also be responsible for ensuring that children are enrolled in school and receive educational services. *24 CFR 578.75 (g) (1) & (2).*

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

When a potential conflict of interest arises, it will be disclosed in writing and will include the person's name, position, phone number and address. It will also detail the nature of the conflict of interest (perceived, apparent, or actual). The letter will be dated and will request action to address the conflict of interest. The letter will be addressed to the The Road Home of Dane County Executive Director.

The Road Home will not make rent reasonableness and housing quality inspections on properties owned by the recipient or subrecipients or any other related entities. Additionally, no covered person (an employee, agent, consultant, officer, elected or appointed official of The Road Home) who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to activities assisted under this part, or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to activities assisted under this part, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from an assisted activity, have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement with respect to an assisted activity, or have a financial interest in the proceeds derived from an assisted activity, either for him or herself or for those with whom he or she has immediate family or business ties, during his or her tenure or during the one-year period following his or her tenure.

### **VAWA Clause**

Any contract between the recipient/subrecipient and the Landlord must include :

1. The requirement to comply with VAWA provision as promulgated in 24 CFR part 5, subpart L;
2. A commitment from the Landlord to provide the HUD Forms 5380 and 5382 to the program participant with any notification of eviction and comply with VAWA's confidentiality requirements;
3. The requirement on the Landlord to include:
  - a. (1) a lease provision that includes all requirements that apply to tenants, the owner or the lease under VAWA, including the prohibited bases for eviction and restrictions on construing lease terms under 24 CFR 5.2005(b) and ©, and
  - (2) language in the lease that permits the program participant to terminate the lease, sublease or occupancy agreement without penalty if the program participant qualifies for an emergency transfer.

### **Lead Safe Housing Rule**

1. When entering the program, families will receive the "Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home" pamphlet and will sign an acknowledgement form that it was received. Acknowledgement form will be kept in file.
2. Exemption- Any unit built after 1978, participants will sign a Lead Based Paint exemption form. Whenever an exempt unit is identified, The Road Home shall maintain evidence of the exemption in the project file.

### **FINANCIAL**

#### **Allowable costs**

- a. Leasing dollars are to be spent directly for rent costs. Program can only draw down from eLOCCS three days prior to rent being paid.
- b. Support services dollars are to be spent for case management time and housing/counseling/travel and transportation services.
- c. Admin dollars are to be spent on eligible admin costs (see 24 CFR part 578.59) for options.