

Record-Keeping Requirements

Reference “Confidentiality” for information on the requirements of keeping records confidential.

Storage of Files

Each program participant must have a file that contains, at a minimum, the information required by funders, housing plans, case notes, and financial records.

Each file should contain current contact information on the Intake Form, so that Tenant Resource Center is able to contact participants if the case manager is out of the office.

All paperwork that is required for a specific program must be kept in both a paper and an electronic file in the case management drive. Paperwork must be scanned into the electronic file within two business days of when it is created. Once scanned, paperwork must be immediately moved out of the “Scans” folder and into the appropriate place in the case management drive.

Files must be stored in the designated secure location that is not accessible to people who do not have authorized access. Files will not be kept in individual offices or spaces other than the designated secure location overnight. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the Housing Services Program Director on a case by case basis.

Files must be saved for a minimum of six years after program exit.

HMIS

All Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and Eviction Prevention Program (EPP) case managers must stay up to date on all required HMIS trainings.

All RRH and EPP case managers will stay up to date and in compliance with the HMIS Policies and Procedures (found on the Institute for Community Alliances website).

All information (including program entries, program exits, interim reviews, services provided, and case notes) must be entered into HMIS within 5 business days.

Information will be printed out of HMIS only as needed. Any information that is printed out of HMIS will be stored in the designated secure location that is not accessible to people who do not have authorized access. Any information printed out of HMIS that needs to be disposed of will be immediately shredded.

Participant Termination Procedure

Program participants who are enrolled in a Tenant Resource Center Housing Services programs will not be terminated from receiving assistance prior to the required or agreed upon end date except in the most serious cases when all other options have been exhausted.

Causes for termination include violence, harassment, or threats against Tenant Resource Center staff.

Clients will not be terminated for failure to engage in supportive services including lack of progress on Housing Service plans, lack of income or increasing income or for being a victim of domestic violence.

Prior to termination, the Tenant Resource Center will exhaust all the following options as applicable:

- Transfer of participant to a new case manager within the Tenant Resource Center
- Change in location at which participant interacts with their case manager and/or other Tenant Resource Center staff
- Transfer of participant to different program within the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium
- Case manager or other staff brings situation anonymously to the Housing Stabilization Case manager meeting for guidance

If all other options have been exhausted and the participant is terminated from the program, the participant will receive written notification of termination through both mail and email as possible.

The written termination notice will contain a statement of the reason(s) for termination, which will include a detailed statement of facts, the source of the information upon which the decision was based, and a copy of the information below detailing the process to appeal the decision.

Participants who have been terminated have the right to appeal the decision.

Initial appeals must be presented to the Housing Services Program Director, Robin Sereno in one of the following ways: by phone at 608.444.7761, by email to robin@tenantresourcecenter.org, or by mail to 1202 Williamson Street Suite 101, Madison, WI 53703.

The Housing Services Program Director will provide a written decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the appeal.

If the participant disagrees with the decision made by the Housing Services Program Director, a second appeal may be presented to the Executive Director, Sterling Lynk, in one of the following ways: by phone at (608) 257-0006, by email to sterling@tenantresourcecenter.org, or by mail to 1202 Williamson Street Suite 101, Madison, WI, 53703.

The Executive Director will provide a written decision within 10 business days of receipt of the second appeal. The decision of the Executive Director is final.

This policy applies to terminations that fall outside of a required or agreed upon end to services.

A required end to services occurs if a participant has exhausted the amount of time that is allowed within their specific program or if a participant's eligibility criteria has changed, making them ineligible for their specific program.

An agreed upon end to services will also occur when the participant has completed their housing plan and/or is no longer in need of assistance.

Client Grievance Policy

People who have received services from the Tenant Resource Center have the right to file a grievance about a decision made or an action taken by any Tenant Resource Center employee, volunteer, or intern.

Initial grievances must be presented to the Executive Director, Sterling Lynk, in one of the following ways: by phone at (608) 257-0006, by email to sterling@tenantresourcecenter.org, or by mail to 1202 Williamson Street Suite 101, Madison, WI 53703. Other management may be included when responding to the grievance at the discretion of the Executive Director. Once the Executive Director has gathered relevant information about the incident, they will decide what, if any, action needs to be taken. The Executive Director will provide a written decision within 10 business days of the initial grievance.

If the person who presented the initial grievance is unsatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, they may present the grievance to the Tenant Resource Center Board of Directors at board@tenantresourcecenter.org. The Board of Directors will review the decision at their next meeting and will come to a decision on the day of the meeting. The Board of Directors will provide a written decision. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Clients of the TRC Housing Services programs will receive a written copy of the agency's Grievance Policy and a signed copy by the client and case manager will be in each client's file.

Absence of Housing Service Program Director

When the Housing Services Program Director is out of the office, the Executive Director will fill the role of Housing Services Director.

Housing First Principles

Housing First is a proven method of ending all types of homelessness and is the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness. Housing First offers individuals and families experiencing homelessness immediate access to permanent affordable or supportive housing, without clinical prerequisites like completion of a course of treatment or evidence of sobriety and with a low threshold for entry. Housing First approaches for rapid re-housing provide quick access to permanent housing through interim rental assistance and supportive services on a time-limited basis. Rapid re-housing programs are designed to have low barriers for program admission, and to serve individuals and families without consideration of past rental, credit or financial history. The Housing First approach has also evolved to encompass a community-level orientation to ending homelessness in which barriers to housing entry are removed and efforts are in place to prioritize the most vulnerable and high-need people for housing assistance.

The Tenant Resource Center's (TRC) Housing Services Programs adhere to Housing First principles with all clients in all programs.

TRC Housing Service Practices include the following:

- Screening criteria (none)

- Potential clients/existing clients WILL NOT be refused services or terminated from the program due to the following:
 - Lose/lack of income or employment
 - Poor credit history
 - Not engaging in mental health services
 - Active substance use / Not engaging in substance treatment
 - Lack of compliance regarding psychiatric medication / treatment
 - Past rental history and/or evictions
 - Criminal record
 - History of Domestic Violence
 - Not actively engaging in supportive services or making progress on Housing Service Plans

Client absences of 90 days or less due to the following will not result in program termination unless otherwise prohibited by law or funder policy:

- Substance use treatment intervention
 - Mental health treatment intervention
 - Hospitalization and short-term rehabilitation
 - Incarceration
 - Or other reason approved by the program director
-
- Clients are made aware of TRC's operational standard of Housing First in the Client Rights document that they receive during the intake appointment.
 - Case managers/Program Directors are trained in and actively employ evidence-based and best practices for client/tenant engagement such as Motivational Interviewing (MI), Critical Time Intervention (CTI), client-centered care, and trauma-informed care.
 - Building and apartment units may include special physical features that accommodate disabilities, reduce harm, and promote health among tenants. These may include elevators, stovetops with automatic shut-offs, wall-mounted emergency pull-cords, ADA wheelchair compliant showers, soundproofing cushions, etc.
 - In the event a provider seeks to terminate services and/or evict a program participant, a notice of termination shall include information of local legal services providers.