

PY 2015 Supportive Housing Program Application Guidelines

Prepared By:
Ohio Development Services Agency
Community Services Division
Office of Community Development

Program Year 2015 Supportive Housing Program Application Guidelines

1. Overview

The Supportive Housing Program (SHP) provides transitional housing to move homeless persons to permanent housing and provides long-term permanent supportive housing to homeless persons with disabilities.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, local governments, public housing authorities and consortia of any eligible applicants for project-based transitional housing and permanent supportive housing activities that meet the housing needs of homeless families and individuals. The grant period will be two years and will start on January 1, 2016. The Office of Community Development (OCD) reserves the right to award one-year grants.

Funds will be awarded to eligible transitional housing and permanent supportive housing providers on a competitive basis. Projects not currently funded by OCD are advised to contact Bob Johnson at (614) 752-8096 to discuss the proposed project and the availability of competitive funds.

SHP grantees are required to apply Housing First principles to their programs to help homeless persons quickly access and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing and permanent supportive housing must be provided without pre-conditions such as income, employment or sobriety. While programs must offer case management and other supportive services, those services must be flexible, individualized and voluntary. Clients cannot be discharged or evicted for failing to comply with case-management services or for violation of a program rule, such as use of alcohol or drugs. In the rare cases when an eviction is necessary, transitional housing clients must be referred to a more appropriate placement, such as a hospital or treatment program and not be exited to homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing clients can only be evicted if the client commits a lease violation and is evicted by a court of law.

Transitional housing providers must target homeless persons with high barriers to entering permanent housing, such as domestic violence, early recovery, families with children, mental illness, and youth aging out of foster care. Applicants must provide documentation including HMIS reports or other data demonstrating that the population served has high barriers to permanent housing.

Preference will be given to transitional housing providers whose programs average length of stay is between four and eight months. Programs with an average length of stay greater than eight months will need to explain why participants in their program need to remain in the program for more than eight months.

Priority will be given to transitional housing providers who administer projects that serve homeless youth, families with young children, victims of domestic violence, persons re-entering a community from an institution or recovery from substance abuse or that comply with a national best practice or research supported design.

Transitional housing programs should meet the following criteria:

- Maintain an average occupancy rate of at least 90 percent.
- Have a clearly defined **exit strategy** that will result in the household moving to a permanent destination upon exit.
- At a minimum, 83 percent of the households should exit to a permanent destination.
- At least 55 percent of households exiting the program should show increased income from time of entry.
- SHP funds may not be used to pay for: mental health services, drug/alcohol treatment, job training, HIV/AIDS clinical treatment, and medical/dental treatment or prescription drug costs.
- Agencies are required to complete three- and six-month follow-ups to ensure that households maintain permanent housing.
- Programs must have a working relationship with their school system and familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act in relation to actions relating to education for homeless youth.

Permanent supportive housing activities should include the following criteria:

- Persons served must have a Disabling Condition (see definition).
- New permanent supportive housing projects can only apply for operating funds or bridge funding, if applicable.
- Funding requests for existing OCD-funded units may include activities currently funded.

- Preference will be given to programs that target chronically homeless persons.
- Persons entering programs that target chronically homeless persons must come from the street, a shelter or safe haven.
- Persons entering permanent supportive housing from transitional housing must have come from a shelter or the streets upon entering transitional housing.
- Permanent supportive housing programs should maintain an average occupancy rate of at least 90 percent.

SHP grantees are required to remain in compliance with OCD Policy 15-01, effective July 1, 2015, which prohibits grantees from entering into subrecipient agreements with other organizations in providing grant activities. However, SHP grantees may coordinate with other partner organizations in providing transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Under that partnership, the grantee will remain responsible for verifying client eligibility and determining eligible expenses prior to expending SHP funds. Accordingly, grantees cannot advance funds to partner agencies for paying future SHP expenses.

Waiver Requests: PY 2014 SHP award recipients that received a two-year award for transitional housing or permanent supportive housing activities are **not** eligible to apply for PY 2015 SHP funds, unless a waiver is requested and approved by OCD. Those agencies may request a waiver if the applicant: opened a new transitional housing or permanent supportive housing program or expanded an existing OCD-funded SHP program after January 1, 2015, and/or the agency is planning to open a new transitional housing or permanent supportive housing program or expand an existing OCD-funded SHP program prior to December 31, 2016. Those agencies may also request a waiver based on other factors which place future operations in jeopardy. **Waiver requests must be submitted in writing and received by OCD** to the attention of Bob Johnson, Supportive Housing Specialist, on or before **June 8, 2015 by 5 p.m.** to 77 S. High Street, 26th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215.

The Ohio Development Services Agency is prohibited by state law from awarding more than 20 percent of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund allocation for Supportive Services. Consequently, SHP applicants are strongly encouraged to keep requests for this activity to a minimum.

The PY 2015 SHP application submission deadline is July 1, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.

2. Request Amounts

Funding requests must be cost effective and reasonable based on the previous SHP award, community need, cost per household served, cost per outcome, local resources, etc. Due to the limited funding available, OCD will most likely award funds consistent with previous years, unless the agency has expanded or increased its funded program capacity.

Applicants for programs not currently funded by OCD should contact OCD for guidance in determining request amounts that take competitive factors into consideration. **Funding requests will be scored based on the cost effectiveness of the program and plan to meet the program goals.** Applicants are advised that funding is limited and that OCD reserves the right to fund applicants for less than the requested amount.

3. Required Match

Applicants must provide at least one dollar in local public or private resources for every two dollars in SHP funds (a ratio of 1:2, other funds to SHP funds). Grants or loans from the Ohio Development Services Agency cannot be used as match. An applicant may use any of the following as match, provided the match is properly documented:

- Applicant organization's cash resources;
- Cash in the form of a grant or donation from a third party, including private sector, nonprofit sector, and federal, state and local government sources;
- Rental income;
- In-kind contribution of a leasehold interest in property;

- Volunteer time, at a value of \$10 per hour for all program-related activities. Volunteers (with appropriate expertise and training) providing professional services such as financial, medical or legal services are valued at the reasonable and customary rate in the community. Staff support or supportive services provided on-site by other local nonprofit agencies may be valued at a cost verified in writing by the providing agency; and
- Contributed materials needed for program implementation.

4. Threshold Requirements

- Proposals must include documentation that the program(s) is (are) supported by the local Continuum of Care (CoC). Agencies in communities that do not have a formal CoC, must explain the efforts the agency is making to coordinate with other agencies in the community to establish a formal CoC. Applications that do not include written verification that the agency is an active participant in its local CoC or equivalent organization, as appropriate, or whose project is not supported by the local CoC may not be reviewed.

Note: Documented support from the HCRP region lead is not required.

- Applicants must be participating in the appropriate Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or, if not a current OCD grantee, agree to participate if awarded funding.
- Proposals must include documentation verifying sufficient matching funds commitment to meet the match requirements for transitional housing and permanent supportive housing programs.
- All program activities must be targeted at people who are homeless. See definition of homelessness in Section 6 Definitions.
- Applications must be complete and include essential information and exhibits.

5. Rating Criteria for competitive program applications

OCD will rate competitive applications on the following criteria.

1. Administrative Capacity (10 points): Extent to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to successfully implement the proposed activities. Items to be considered include the organization's history. Past monitoring visits may be taken into account.
2. Program Design (15 points): Extent to which the proposal is well designed and likely to accomplish the stated objectives and proposed outcomes.
3. Targeting (10 points): The extent to which the project provides income eligibility requirements restricting participation to households up to 35 percent of Area Median Income and the agency will document that persons served by the program are homeless. Facility-based transitional housing programs should be able to demonstrate that they are targeting harder-to-serve populations including; victims of domestic violence, families with young children, persons with severe and persistent mental illness, persons re-entering a community from an institution or in recovery from substance abuse or that comply with a national best practice or research-supported design.
4. Need (10 points): Extent to which the project demonstrates through local COC data or other statistics that a significant gap would exist in the continuum if the program does not receive funding.
5. HMIS Data Quality/Outcomes (30 points): All applicants are required to meet HUD-minimum HMIS data requirements and quality standards to be considered for funding. To earn points in this criterion, applicant's data quality must meet or exceed minimum standards consisting of, but not limited to, null and missing values, according to a point scale detailed in the funding application. Based on data entered into HMIS, applicants must demonstrate success in helping homeless persons obtain or retain permanent destinations. Additional performance measures will be detailed in the program application.

6. Program Feasibility (15 points): Extent to which the proposal is reasonable and cost effective based on request amount, need, proposed outcomes, historic funding levels and amount requested.
7. Budget Accuracy/Reasonableness (10 points): Extent to which budget figures are accurate, consistent and reasonable.

6. Definitions

Administration – Expenses such as accounting for grant funds, preparing reports, obtaining program audits and other costs directly related to administering the grant. Administrative costs can also include training for staff who will administer the program or case managers who will serve program participants, as long as this training is directly related to learning about the SHP. Please note those costs must be incurred within the grant's work completion period and that all costs incurred prior to the grant start date such as writing the application are ineligible.

Administration requests cannot exceed 5 percent of the SHP grant award.

After Care Services – Supportive services that assist persons leaving transitional housing programs in maintaining independent permanent housing. OCD will only fund up to six months of after care.

Bridge Funding for Permanent Supportive Housing – Time-limited, rental subsidy for homeless, disabled persons awaiting a housing subsidy in Permanent Supportive Housing.

- Program participants must be homeless, disabled and at or below 35 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).
- Rental subsidy may not exceed six months.
- Applicant must provide proof (e.g. a Shelter Plus Care or SHP Permanent Supportive Housing grant award letter, construction schedule, etc.) that a subsidized Permanent Supportive Housing unit will be available at the end of the subsidy term.
- Subsidy period may not be extended.

Chronically Homeless Person – Individual that is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless and living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or a shelter continuously for at least one year OR on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the cumulative total of those occasions is at least one year.

Continuum of Care – A planning process that helps communities plan for and develop a strategy to end homelessness. It provides a full range of emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, permanent supportive housing and supportive service resources to address the various needs of homeless persons.

Data Collection and Evaluation – Appropriate and reasonable costs associated with data collection and reporting using the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) or a comparable client-level database. Eligible costs include purchasing HMIS software and/or user licenses; leasing or purchasing needed computer equipment for providers and the central server; costs associated with data collection, entry and analysis; and staffing associated with the operating HMIS, including training. These costs are eligible to pay for HMIS-related charges by the HMIS implementation.

Disabling Condition – A diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, HIV/AIDS, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of those conditions.

Entitlement Communities – Those cities and counties that receive McKinney-Vento Emergency Solutions Grant funds directly from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Entitlement areas in Ohio are: Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lakewood, Springfield, Toledo, Youngstown and Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton and Montgomery counties.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – A computerized database that allows organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness to collect client information electronically and easily produce required reports.

Homeless Person – HUD’s definition includes the following four categories:

1. Literally homeless individuals/families
 - a. Literal homelessness is further defined as homeless individuals/families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - i. Sleeping in a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation
 - ii. Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing designated to provide temporary living arrangements
2. Individuals/families who will imminently (within 14 days) lose their primary nighttime residence with no subsequent residence AND no resources or support networks
3. Unaccompanied youth or families with children/youth who meet the homeless definition under another federal statute and three additional criteria.
4. Individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence with no subsequent residence, resources or support networks

Category 3 is not recognized as homeless for purposes of the state’s SHP.

Housing Units – The number of congregate facilities, apartments or bedrooms within a single-family home to be provided by the program.

Key People – Staff persons who are primarily responsible for supervising, managing or delivering the provider agency’s program(s) and reaching the proposed performance targets.

Operating – The recurring costs of operating a transitional housing or permanent supportive housing program. This includes staff costs to operate the program including the portion of administrators’ time associated with program oversight/operations, front desk, security, maintenance and overnight staff, cooks and program personnel who do not perform supportive services. Non-staff operating costs include utilities, equipment, insurance, office supplies and furnishings. Costs of staff who have shared duties (operating and supportive services) should be prorated accordingly.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Long-term housing targeted to homeless persons with disabilities including mental illness, chemical dependency, AIDS/HIV related diseases, or serious permanent physical disabilities. Housing provided by this activity must be permanent and not time limited. Programs must provide residents access to supportive services to help them maintain housing stability and successfully live in the community.

Rental Assistance – Rent payments to support operating transitional housing and permanent supportive housing projects. (see note below)

Supportive Services – Includes, but is not limited to, services including: case management/coordination; transportation; goal planning; permanent housing placement; referrals to education and training programs; referrals to employment opportunities; referrals to health care; referrals to treatment for substance abuse and mental health problems; assistance in obtaining financial aid; and child care which may be provided directly by the applicant or by arrangement with public or private service providers. (see note below)

Note: Permanent supportive housing projects that are not currently funded by OCD and projects that currently receive only operating funds are NOT eligible to apply for rental assistance or supportive services.

Transitional Housing – provides from four to 24 months of housing and supportive services to facilitate moving homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. The supportive services may be provided by the organization managing the housing or coordinated by them and provided by other public or private agencies. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures, at one site or in multiple sites. This type of housing must serve a hard-to-serve population consistent with national best practices and research.

7. Submission Instructions

Interested eligible applicants should fully and concisely complete the SHP application through the OCEAN System and upload the required attachments. The SHP application and instructions are available online at ocean.ohio.gov.

The application is designed so that applicants complete most narrative portions of the application using Microsoft Word and upload them as attachments in OCEAN. Applicants must use a 10-point or larger font size to complete the application attachments. The OCEAN portion of the application includes formulas that automatically calculate and fill in budget totals and totals for program specific charts and tables. Applicants will be responsible for printing the OCEAN application and attachments for their own records, if they so desire.

Applicants must submit the application through OCEAN. The application deadline is July 1, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.