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SERVICE STANDARDS FOR HOUSING SERVICES

Origination Date: January 9, 2020					
Reviewed/approved by the Continuum of Care Committee	February 13, 2020				
Approved by the Planning Council	February 19, 2020				

I. GOAL

The goal of Housing services is to provide PLWHA assistance in maintaining or accessing residential services in order to maintain linkage and retention in care.

II. DESCRIPTION

Housing provides transitional, short-term, or emergency housing assistance to enable a client or family to gain or maintain outpatient/ambulatory health services and treatment, including temporary assistance necessary to prevent homelessness and to gain or maintain access to medical care. Activities within the Housing category must also include the development of an individualized housing plan, updated annually, to guide the client's linkage to permanent housing.

Eligible housing can include:

- Core medical or support services (such as residential substance use disorder services or mental health services, residential foster care, or assisted living residential services).

The necessity of housing services for the purposes of medical care must be documented.

Housing activities also include housing referral services, including assessment, search, placement, and housing advocacy services on behalf of the eligible client, as well as fees associated with these activities.

III. KEY SERVICE COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Development /update of an individualized Housing plan
(Including objectives for gaining stable and permanent housing)
- Transitional housing, Emergency Shelter or short term rental assistance
- Assessment, Search, Housing Placement and Advocacy
- Housing related Referral Services
- Fees associated with these services are permitted

IV. SERVICE LIMITATIONS /REQUIREMENTS

Housing services must comply with the following limitations for short-term assistance:

- Clients must be RWHAP eligible
- Client stay shall not exceed 24 consecutive months.
- Assistance must be documented and support client's retention in medical care

A written request to waive restrictions is required for all services that exceed limitations for assistance. Written request must be approved by Recipient prior to providing assistance beyond 24 months.

Unallowable services include:

- direct cash payments to clients, cannot be used for mortgage payments or rental/ security deposits

V. ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLAN

Development and implementation of an individualized service plan can incorporate a Housing plan as long as it includes SMART goals and objectives that guide client's linkage to stable permanent housing.

- Determine and document clients housing needs
- Using SMART goals, develop a plan used to guide client's linkage to stable permanent housing
- Ensure client is linked to medical care and follow up to ensure retention

DOCUMENTATION

Written documentation for each client shall comply with all required documentation as outlined in the NEMA Universal Standards of Care, including but not limited to the following:

1. Client's name and unique identifier number
2. Proof of HIV+ status
3. Initial Intake / Screenings
4. Documentation of Certification and Recertification
5. Documentation of assessment/reassessment(s)
6. Signed initial and updated individualized service/ housing plan
7. Evidence of consent for services
8. Documentation of each contact with or on behalf of the client
9. Evidence of the client's understanding of his/her rights and responsibilities
10. Signed "Consent to release information" form if needed. This form must be specific and time limited

VI. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

- Para-professional with a High School diploma or GED with HIV experience/training preferred
- Staff working with housing assistance clients should possess the knowledge and experience to deliver the services specific to EMA standards specifications, including basic knowledge of emergency interventions
- Staff working with clients should be well versed in the process for referral to and application for local, state and federal housing programs
- Training on EMA Standards of Care for Housing and Universal Standards
- Staff will attend Rutgers AETC (AIDS Education and Training) Medical Case Management/ Case Management training
- Ongoing training on CHAMP system and pertinent updates
- Staff will receive training regarding confidentiality, client rights and the agency's grievance procedures (provided by agency)
- Staff will receive annual evaluation/review (provided by agency)
- Valid Driver's license if needed

VII. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM GUIDANCE: [HIV/AIDS BUREAU POLICY 16-02]

HRSA RWHAP recipients and subrecipients that use funds to provide Housing must have mechanisms in place to assess and document the housing status and housing service needs of new clients, and at least annually for existing clients.

HRSA RWHAP recipients and subrecipients, along with local decision-making planning bodies, are strongly encouraged to institute duration limits to housing activities. HRSA HAB recommends recipients and subrecipients align duration limits with those definitions used by other housing programs, such as those administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which currently uses 24 months for transitional housing.

Housing activities cannot be in the form of direct cash payments to clients and cannot be used for mortgage payments or rental deposits; although these may be allowable costs under the HUD Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS grant awards.

Housing, as described here, replaces PCN 11-01.