



Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County Continuum of Care – MI 506 Homelessness Prevention Service Standards

Definition

Homeless Prevention is an intervention that assists clients with rental arrears and rental assistance in the event that they have fallen behind on their rent and are being evicted from their home. Homeless prevention also provides stabilization services to prevent shelter entrance and promote housing retention. The costs of homelessness prevention are only eligible to the extent that the assistance is necessary to help the program participant regain stability in the program participant's current permanent housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

Community Goals for Homelessness Prevention

- Provide the minimal amount of assistance needed to resolve a household's crisis within the eligibility criteria; this helps ensure limited funding is available to as many households as feasible.
- Provide strengths-based case management focusing on long-term stability.
- Complete an individualized assessment that determines household needs and eligibility for mainstream resources.
- Assist households in obtaining community supports to end their housing crisis, including but not limited to linkage to mainstream benefits (SSI/SSDI, SNAP, TANF, etc.), vital documents, case management, medical and mental health, financial, legal, education, mediation, utility financial assistance, relocation assistance and employment services as appropriate.
- Create a housing stabilization plan with project participants.
- Provide needed housing stabilization services.

Prevention Provider Community Standards

All service providers shall adhere to a standard of ethics and practices that ensure all persons in housing crisis are treated with dignity and respect. All prevention programs shall incorporate the following practices into their policies and procedures:

- All persons in housing crisis shall be treated with dignity and respect.
- All households shall be treated fairly. Providers shall implement all rules consistently.
- No persons seeking assistance shall face discrimination, in accordance with Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the American Disabilities Act, and the Elliott-Larsen Civil Right Act (Public Act 453).
- When provided, case management shall emphasize the household's goals, choices, and preferences, an unwavering respect for their strengths, and reinforcement of progress.
- All households receiving prevention assistance shall have access and assistance in obtaining community supports to end their housing crisis, including: linkage to mainstream benefits (SSI/SSDI, SNAP, TANF, etc.), vital documents, case management, medical and mental health, financial, legal, education, and employment services as appropriate.

- Low-barrier services, which place a minimum number of expectations on people requesting assistance, shall be provided to all persons:
 - Program participants are not expected to abstain from using alcohol or other drugs, or from carrying on with similar activities while engaging in services
 - If a grantee or subgrantee engages in explicitly religious activities, the explicitly religious activities must be offered separately, in time or location, and participation must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the programs or activities
- Staff, including contractors, shall use de-escalation practices in any tense or escalating situation. Procedures shall outline protocol for both de-escalation practices and for when a situation escalates to an unsafe environment.
- Assistance shall only be provided in cases where a rental assistance agreement is in place between the providers and property owner, and a lease agreement is in place between the program participant and owner.

Intake & Eligibility

All households must receive an intake screening to determine the appropriate housing intervention. This includes an initial assessment of homelessness status and income level. Households must meet the below criteria at program intake to be eligible for Homelessness Prevention programs:

- HUD Category 2 Definition of Homeless (At Imminent Risk of Homelessness); OR
- HUD Category 3 Definition of Homeless (Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes); OR
- HUD Category 4 Definition of Homeless (Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence); OR
- At Risk of Homelessness, as defined by HUD (categories 1-3); AND
- Meet any income criteria identified by the funder

Note: funding sources may apply additional limitations on the populations eligible for homelessness prevention funds. Agencies should verify additional limitations with appropriate funder.

Note: it is recommended that agencies receiving funds for Homeless Prevention carefully review requirements for their funding source to understand any additional regulations