

BLUE EARTH COUNTY
PROVIDER STANDARD FOR HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING LONG TERM HOMELESS (LTH)

Blue Earth County
Government Center
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It is the goal of Blue Earth County to provide high-quality Housing Support programs and opportunities to qualifying participants and families. It is the expectation of Blue Earth County that all Housing Support Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing LTH providers operate ethical and professional programs that provide these high-quality opportunities. These guidelines and standards were developed to assist providers in creating programs that align with this goal and expectation. These guidelines and standards are meant to supplement all requirements and expectations in related MN Statutes and the Housing Support Agreement. If a contradiction should arise, the MN Statute and/or Housing Support Agreement will supersede the guideline and standard.

I. Housing Choice and Structure

- a. Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing LTH participants have choice in the location and other features of their housing. Intake procedures should include a list of housing needs and preferences. Participants should be given as much choice as possible given the constraints of the market and funding. It is recommended, that participants, at the minimum, see the unit before signing a lease.
- b. Housing is assumed to be permanent, with no actual or expected time limits other than those defined under a standard lease or occupancy agreement.
- c. The funding for Housing Support is contingent on the participant remaining eligible. Participants who no longer need program support services or lose eligibility may remain in their housing. Participants may move among different units or transfer to other providers and still be considered in permanent housing. *These standards may be different for site-based providers*
- d. No participant is required to share living areas. Participants may choose to live with family members or have a roommate(s). For participants choosing to live with others, it is recommended the unit contain at least as many bedrooms as participants.

II. Separation of Housing and Services

- a. Program participants are not required to demonstrate housing readiness to gain access to housing units.
- b. Continued tenancy is not linked in any way with adherence to service provisions. However, the Housing Support benefit is dependent on participants demonstration of ongoing eligibility.
- c. Program participants have legal rights to the unit, under their rental lease, with no special provisions added by the Housing Support provider and/or service provider.

III. Service Philosophy

- a. Service philosophy is consistent with the Housing First model. Program participants choose the type, sequence, and intensity of services on an ongoing basis.
- b. Housing Support Supplemental Service providers are expected to offer services at least once a month. Participants should be able to choose the style and frequency of services.
- c. Housing Support Supplemental Service providers deliver interventions to address housing instability.
- d. Housing Support Supplemental Service providers increase, and are strong advocates for, participants' self-determination and autonomy.

IV. Service Array

- a. Housing Support Supportive Housing (LTH) providers offer services to help participants access and maintain housing. At minimum, the services need to be according to the needs identified in each participant's Professional Statement of Need. These may include, but is not limited to the following services:
 1. Assistance with application fees and security deposits
 2. Utility setup and ongoing payments
 3. Rental payments
 4. Furnishings
 5. Neighborhood orientation
 6. Landlord relations
 7. Budgeting
 8. Social Skills and/or basic living skills
 9. Employment supports assist with gaining, maintaining, or increasing employment
 10. Health supervision services
- b. Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) providers may assist in arranging other wraparound services for program participants as needed and coordinate with other service providers. This may include, but is not limited to:
 1. Accessing and maintain financial benefits
 2. Health related services
 3. Social services
 4. Psychiatric services
 5. Substance use treatment, and ongoing services
 6. Supported employment services
 7. Services supporting social integration
- c. It is recommended that Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) providers will assist participants with identifying 24-hour crisis intervention options, as needed.

V. Program Structure

- a. Housing Support Room and Board Rate funds are only allowed to be used to pay for rent, utilities, food, household supplies, and other "Allowable Expenses" as defined by form DHS-7127-ENG found on eDocs.
- b. Supportive Housing referrals may come from a variety of referral sources. Referrals for Supportive Housing (LTH) must come from the River Valleys CoC Coordinated Entry System (CES).
- c. It is recommended that Supportive Housing (LTH) providers maintain a staff to participant ratio of 1:25 or less. The recommended staff to participant ratio for family cases is 1:20 or less.
- d. It is recommended that Supportive Housing (LTH) provider program staff meet frequently for supervision to plan and review services for program participants.
- e. It is recommended that Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) providers use a frequent internal organizational meeting to conduct a brief review of all participants.

- f. Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) providers will responsibly manage the use of Housing Support funds. The provider will report usage of Housing Support funds to the County upon request, which is in line with the Housing Support Agreement section (d) related to quality control.
- g. In addition to all statutory and contractual minimum staff qualifications, all program staff who have direct contact* with individuals in Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) are recommended to have documented training in the following areas:
 - 1. Housing First Model
 - 2. Working with Landlords
 - 3. Tenant Rights & Responsibilities
 - 4. Harm Reduction
 - 5. Motivational Interviewing
 - 6. Stages of Change
 - 7. Boundaries
 - 8. De-Escalation
 - 9. Staff Safety

*Direct contact means providing face-to-face care, training, supervision, counseling, consultation, or medication assistance to recipients of Housing Support.
- h. Program staff with manager and supervisor responsibilities are recommended to have additional training/experience with supervision and management practices.

VI. Policies and Procedures

- a. Supportive Housing and Supportive Housing (LTH) providers have the following policies and procedures available upon request:
 - 1. Client Intake Policy/Procedure
 - 2. Client Discharge Policy/Procedure
 - 3. Client Grievance and Appeal Policy/Procedure
 - 4. Policy/Procedure regarding unspent Housing Support Room and Board Rate funds, otherwise known as Pooled funds
 - 5. Policy/Procedure regarding Client Obligation and unpaid Client Obligations

Questions or comments about these guidelines and standards can be directed to the Blue Earth County Regional Housing Supports Supervisor.

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