

# HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS PROGRAM

## WRITTEN STANDARDS

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## INTRODUCTION

Harris County has developed the following standards for providing assistance with Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funds as required by 24 CFR 576.400 (e). These standards were created in coordination with the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care which includes Harris County, the City of Houston, Fort Bend County and the City of Pasadena, and Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs funding within the CoC geographic area. They are in accordance with the interim rule for the Emergency Solutions Grants Program released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on December 4, 2011 and the final rule for the definition of homelessness also released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on December 4, 2011.

Harris County expects that the standards will adjust as Harris County gains more experience with and collects more data from services provided with the Emergency Solutions Grants program. The Standards serve as the guiding principles for funding programs. The Business Rules outline the operations and process for carrying out each program component.

## DEFINITIONS

*Chronically Homeless* – a homeless individual with a disability who lives either in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, or in an institutional care facility if the individual has been living in the facility for fewer than 90 days and had been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility. In order to meet the “chronically homeless” definition, the individual also must have been living as described above continuously for at least 12 months, or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, where the combined occasions total a length of time of at least 12 months. Each period separating the occasions must include at least 7 nights of living in a situation other than a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven.

*Continuum of Care (CoC)* – the group composed of representatives of relevant organizations, which generally includes nonprofit homeless providers; victim service providers; faith-based organizations; governments; businesses; advocates; public housing agencies; school districts; social service providers; mental health agencies; hospitals; universities; affordable housing developers; law enforcement; organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons that are organized to plan for and

provide, as necessary, a system of outreach, engagement, and assessment; emergency shelter; rapid re-housing; transitional housing; permanent housing; and prevention strategies to address the various needs of homeless persons and persons at risk of homelessness for a specific geographic area.

*Emergency Shelter* – any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

*Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)* – the information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with the HUD’s data collection, management, and reporting standards and used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at-risk of homelessness.

*Homelessness Prevention* – Housing relocation and stabilization services and short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to prevent the individual or family from moving to an emergency shelter, a place not meant for human habitation, or another place described in Homeless Category 1 of Appendix A: HUD Definition for Homeless.

*Private Nonprofit Organization* – a private nonprofit organization that is a secular or religious organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and which is exempt from taxation under subtitle A of the Code, has an accounting system and a voluntary board, and practices nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance. A private nonprofit organization does not include a governmental organization, such as a public housing agency or housing finance agency.

*Program Participant* – an individual or family who is assisted under ESG program.

*Rapid Re-Housing* – Housing relocation and stabilization services and/or short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to help individuals or families living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

*Service Area (applicable to Homelessness Prevention only)* – Harris County’s service area includes unincorporated Harris County and the 12 cities within the County that have signed cooperative agreements. Presently, the County has cooperative agreements with the following cities: Deer Park, Galena Park, Humble, Jacinto City, Katy, La Porte, Morgan's Point, Seabrook, Shoreacres, South Houston, Tomball, and Webster. Houston, Baytown and Pasadena utilize their own community development resources and are not within the Harris County service area.

Homeless projects (except Homelessness Prevention projects) may be located throughout Harris County, including Houston, Baytown and Pasadena.

*Street Outreach* – Essential Services related to reaching out to unsheltered homeless individuals and families, connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care.

*Subrecipient* – a unit of general purpose local government or private nonprofit organization to which a recipient makes available ESG funds.

*Victim Service Provider* – a private nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This term includes rape crisis centers, battered women’s shelters, domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other programs.

## STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL PROGRAM COMPONENTS

### ELIGIBLE ESG PROGRAM COMPONENTS

There are four (4) ESG Program Components:

1. Rapid Re-Housing,
2. Emergency Shelter,
3. Homelessness Prevention and
4. Street Outreach.

Funds for ESG can be used to support any of the eligible components. The CoC and the County give priority to funding that supports securing housing options for homeless households and to support the expansion of rapid re-housing.

### COORDINATING ASSESSMENT & SERVICES AMONG PROVIDERS

Harris County expects that all providers participate in the coordinated assessment system. The system consists of an electronic assessment system housed in the HMIS and a dedicated Project Manager through the CoC Lead Agency. The electronic assessment system has been established for most program components, and the CoC is working to complete the system for all components. Coordinated assessment uses a common housing assessment and triage tool to ensure that all homeless individuals are referred to the appropriate housing intervention. Coordinated assessment will be used as each housing intervention supported by ESG is fully

integrated into the system referral process. Prior to full implementation of coordinated assessment, agencies can continue to accept direct referrals from individuals and other agencies.

**Designate staff members for CoC Provider Input forum:** Each agency will assign two representatives to the input forum, in addition to one member (CEO/ED) who has decision making capacity for the program. CoC Provider Input Forums will meet quarterly, or more often as required by current CoC policies. The Provider Input Forum is the venue where providers give and receive information regarding CoC strategies and policies.

**Participate in any standardized training as designated by ESG funders and offered through CoC.** The CoC will provide a vetted and standardized training curriculum for all housing stability case managers that will be available for all agencies providing case management for housing based services. The curriculum and standards will be developed as a part of and in partnership with the Continuum of Care Technical Assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This will focus on the requirements of maintaining stable housing and ensure access to mainstream resources that will provide ongoing, continued and necessary support for households to gain and maintain stable housing.

## COORDINATING WITH MAINSTREAM AND TARGETED HOMELESS PROVIDERS

Harris County expects that every agency that is funded through ESG will coordinate with and access mainstream and other targeted homeless resources. Harris County will evaluate performance of each provider based on the outcomes achieved toward housing models adopted through the CoC Steering committee. These outcome measures will be used to evaluate program success annually. Harris County will use this and other performance metrics to guide funding decisions for ESG funded programs. Required outcomes for each intervention around accessing mainstream resources will match the outcomes approved by the CoC Steering Committee annually.

## STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO EMERGENCY SHELTER

### ELIGIBILITY: HOMELESS STATUS

Homeless clients entering into the shelter system must meet the HUD criteria for homelessness as either literally homeless (Homeless Category 1), at imminent risk of homelessness (Homeless Category 2), homeless under another federal statute (Homeless Category 3), or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence (Homeless Category 4).

For additional details related to the HUD definition of Homeless and applicability to each program component, see Appendix A and Appendix C.

### ELIGIBILITY: INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

As already indicated above under Coordinating Assessment & Services, case managers will use the Continuum wide assessment tool to review client situation, understand eligibility, and begin the process of determining length of assistance. The tool will include an assessment form for diversion that providers are currently testing. Once testing has been finalized, the diversion assessment will be required for all providers, including DV providers. Providers must enter data into HMIS or a comparable database for DV providers.

### ELIGIBILITY: PRIORITIZATION & REFERRAL POLICIES

Emergency shelters will prioritize individuals/families that:

- Cannot be diverted; and
- Are literally homeless; and
- Can be safely accommodated in the shelter; and
- Are not in need of emergency medical or psychiatric services or danger to self or others.

Also note the following:

- Emergency Shelters cannot discriminate per HUD regulations;
- There are no requirements related to ID, income or employment;
- Transgender placement is based on self-identification of gender.

## STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING

### ELIGIBILITY: STATUS AS HOMELESS OR AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

#### HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Individuals/families, who meet the HUD criteria for the following definitions, are eligible for Homelessness Prevention assistance:

- At Risk of Homelessness
- Homeless Category 2: Imminently at-risk of homelessness
- Homeless Category 3: Homeless under other federal statute and
- Homeless Category 4: Fleeing/attempting to flee DV (as long as the individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee DV are **not** also literally homeless. If the individuals/families are also literally homeless they would actually qualify for rapid re-housing instead. See below.)

Additional eligibility requirements related to Homelessness Prevention include:

- **Proof of residence** within the Harris County service area. A map for reference is included on Appendix E.
- **Total household income below 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI)** for the area at initial assessment. Clients must provide documentation of household income, including documentation of unemployment and zero income affidavit for clients without income.

#### RAPID RE-HOUSING

Individuals/families, who meet the HUD criteria for the following definitions, are eligible for Rapid Re-Housing assistance:

- Homeless Category 1: Literally homeless
- Homeless Category 4: Fleeing/attempting to flee DV (as long as the individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee DV are **also** literally homeless).

For additional details related to the HUD definition of Homeless and At Risk of Homelessness and applicability of these definitions to each program component, see Appendix A, B and C.

## ELIGIBILITY: INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

Once coordinated access is available for all housing interventions, all clients must have an initial eligibility assessment and triage for appropriate housing by a specially trained housing assessor. All clients come through coordinated access and are assessed using housing triage tool in HMIS. Housing triage will identify, based on the standard assessment, individuals are best suited for rapid re-housing. The standard assessment accounts for length and frequency of homelessness, physical and mental health status, criminal history, veteran status, domestic violence experience, substance abuse conditions and employment history.

## TARGETED POPULATIONS: CLIENT PRIORITIZATION

### HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Note that all targeted individuals and families described below have to meet the minimum HUD requirements for eligibility to HP.

Harris County will use a shared assessment form that will target those clients with the most barriers to housing. Each barrier will have an allotment of points, and the higher score (and more barriers) the more likely the client will receive services. The assessment of barriers is based on an objective review of each client's current situation using the tool rather than the subjective opinion of a case manager assessing each client's needs. All clients must have a minimum score of 20 points to receive assistance. See Appendix D for a copy of the assessment form.

Additionally, Harris County prioritizes clients who are currently in their own housing and have high needs for homelessness prevention funding. This can include, but is not limited to individuals and families who,

- have previously received Rapid Re-Housing assistance and are at risk of becoming homeless again, regardless of barrier assessment score (these households will be identified and triaged through the Coordinated Access system);
- have young children who have limited housing options

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## RAPID RE-HOUSING

Coordinated access will prioritize individuals and families who are currently homeless but not in need of permanent supportive housing as eligible for rapid re-housing. This can include, but is not limited to individuals and families who:

- are first time homeless; or
- have few recent episodes of homelessness.

It should be noted, rapid re-housing funds are directed to individuals and families with income or work history and skills that indicate employability.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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### DURATION AND AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE

Harris County, as part of the Houston/Harris County CoC, has adopted the CoC approved Housing Models and Business Rules to measure community outcomes for all housing interventions. The CoC and the County require that all subrecipients for ESG Rapid Re-Housing funds use the CoC-wide assessment tools to determine the duration and amount of assistance. The tools do not dictate the amount of assistance that each household receives, but guides the case manager and client to determine the appropriate amount of assistance for each household.

- All clients are assessed to determine initial need and create a budget to outline planned need for assistance.
- Agencies cannot set organizational maximums or minimums but must rely on the CoC wide tools to determine household need.
- Through case management, client files are reviewed monthly to ensure that planned expenditures for the month validate financial assistance request.
- Harris County expects that households will receive the minimum amount of assistance necessary to stabilize in housing.

Clients cannot exceed 24 months of assistance in a 36 month period. The Rapid Re-Housing Business Rules outline the processes that require supervisory approval.

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## PARTICIPANT SHARE

Participant share will be determined by use of common assessment and budgeting tools approved through the Continuum of Care. These tools will determine the monthly assistance amount and client contribution. Clients will participate in the development of their individual housing plan with a case manager based on client goals and shared goals for achieving housing stability. Case managers will use the housing plan to determine the client contribution based on monthly income. Clients are expected to contribute a portion of their income based on budgeting to ensure housing stability. Financial assistance is available for households with zero income. Details of when clients are terminated or redirected to a more appropriate intervention are outlined in the business rules.

## HOUSING STABILIZATION AND RELOCATION RELATED ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

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### REQUIRED SERVICES: CASE MANAGEMENT & CASE LOADS

The Continuum of Care and the County require that all clients are referred to a case manager through the coordinated assessment system. Coordinated assessment will triage homeless clients to rapid re-housing that are in need of short to medium term assistance based on individual experience and vulnerability. Coordinated Access Assessors will refer to a rapid re-housing case manager who is managed through a case management intermediary contracted by local funders or through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Harris County Social Services who are funded directly by the County. The case manager will perform an individual assessment to create a housing plan using the common assessment tools. This begins the process to rapidly re-house the homeless household as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Homelessness prevention clients must have an initial home visit when first approved for assistance and subsequent house visits with each recertification every three months. It is expected that case managers will conduct office visits with homelessness prevention clients between home visits, at least once per month. Case managers and program managers are encouraged to provide more than the minimum required services through case management.

Rapid re-housing case managers should maintain an average case load of 35 clients. This will allow case managers to provide quality case management and ensure that services are targeted to individuals most likely to be successful with rapid re-housing assistance. As the rapid re-housing program for the continuum expands, this number may increase.

Case management includes home and office visits determined by client need and supported by the housing plan.

As required by the Continuum of Care Housing Models, case managers are expected to follow up with clients that have successfully exited rapid re-housing case management at a minimum of 30 days after exiting the program. Clients who remain in housing for 90 days after exiting rapid re-housing, identified through HMIS, are categorized as stably housed.

Case management staff must have an updated copy of the Rental Assistance Agreement and ensure that the fiscal agent is informed of any changes to the participant rent share as indicated in the Housing Stabilization Plan.

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## REQUIRED SERVICES: HOUSING LOCATION SERVICES

Any subrecipient of ESG assistance must also agree to utilize and may contribute to the function of a housing specialist for households receiving rapid re-housing. Also known as a Housing Navigator, this specialized position will be dedicated to finding appropriate housing and developing relationships with affordable housing providers so that ESG clients have greater housing choice, rather than expecting that clients must navigate the system on their own.

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## REQUIRED SERVICES: INSPECTION AND LANDLORD AGREEMENT

Any unit that receives financial assistance through rapid re-housing must pass a Housing Quality Standards Inspection as outlined in the ESG regulations. The inspections will be conducted by a qualified agency with expertise in inspection. The process for scheduling and conducting an inspection is outlined in the rapid re-housing business rules.

Any unit that receives rental assistance payments through rapid re-housing must have an agreement in place between the financial assistance fiscal intermediary and the property. The rental assistance agreement details the terms under which rental assistance will be provided. A copy of the rental assistance template is included in the rapid re-housing business rules and outlines the requirements for rental payment as well as any notice to vacate or eviction by the owner.

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## INELIGIBLE SERVICES: CREDIT REPAIR AND LEGAL SERVICES

Harris County will not allow ESG funds to be used for credit repair and legal services. Harris County has found limited access to this resource by clients and providers and will instead

encourage the use of mainstream service providers and establish them as part of the system of providers with formal relationship.

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## OPTIONAL SERVICES: SECURITY/UTILITY DEPOSITS

Rental and utility deposits can be included in housing stabilization services as dictated by the housing stabilization plan. Rental and utility deposits can be included in lieu of or in combination with rental assistance for a unit. Inspections and rental assistance agreements for units with only security deposits should be outlined in the program's rapid re-housing policies and procedures.

- Security deposits can cover up to two months of rent.
- Deposits may remain with the client once a client is positively exited from rapid re-housing assistance and at the conclusion of the Rental Assistance Agreement.
- If a client leaves a program before completing assistance or leaves their housing prior to completing case management, the subrecipient must track and return the deposit.
- Security and utility deposit transactions will be managed through the program fiscal agent(s) and are outlined in the business rules/policies and procedures.

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## OPTIONAL SERVICES: RENTAL APPLICATION FEES

Harris County expects that rapid re-housing location specialists will work closely with housing providers and establish trusting relationships among landlords in a way that will encourage property owners and managers to waive application fees for rental properties. To that end, application fees can only be provided for one application at a time; but note that this only limits the number of applications that require application fees. Case managers and housing specialists can and should work with clients and landlords to process as many free applications as possible.

## ELIGIBILITY: PERIODIC RE-CERTIFICATION

All case managers are required to re-certify clients based on the following schedule. At that time, a case manager may decide to extend, decrease or discontinue providing assistance.

Program Component	Schedule	Re-certification Criteria
Homelessness Prevention	Every 3 months	For both HP and RRH, to continue to receive assistance, clients must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be at or below 30% AMI AND</li> <li>• lack sufficient resources and support networks necessary to retain housing without ESG assistance.</li> </ul> Families are required to provide information on income, assets greater than \$5,000, deductions, and family composition during the recertification process.
Rapid Re-Housing	Annually	

## STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO STREET OUTREACH

### ELIGIBILITY: HOMELESS STATUS

Individuals/families who meet the HUD criteria for the following definitions are eligible for Street Outreach services:

- Homeless Category 1: Literally Homeless
- Homeless Category 4: Fleeing/attempting to flee DV (where the individuals/families also meet the criteria for Category 1)

In addition, individuals and families must be living on the streets or other places not meant for human habitation **and** be unwilling or unable to access services in emergency shelter.

### ELIGIBILITY: INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

Harris County requires that agencies conducting street outreach activities must provide individuals and families with an assessment and enter data into HMIS or a comparable database

for DV providers. Harris County encourages providers to develop relationships with unsheltered homeless persons that will help connect them with emergency shelter and housing services primarily through a referral to Coordinated Access.

## TARGETED POPULATIONS

Although the homeless population is considered a vulnerable population, street outreach activities should target those who are extremely vulnerable including youth and chronically homeless persons.

**APPENDIX A: HUD DEFINITION FOR HOMELESS**

<b>HUD CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HOMELESS</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	Literally Homeless	<p>Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;</li> <li>• Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); <u>or</u></li> <li>• Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 2</b>	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<p>Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;</li> <li>• No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u></li> <li>• The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 3</b>	Homeless under other Federal statutes	<p>Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;</li> <li>• Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;</li> <li>• Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 4</b>	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	<p>Any individual or family who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;</li> <li>• Has no other residence; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B: HUD DEFINITION FOR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

<b>HUD CRITERIA FOR DEFINING AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	Individuals and Families	<p>An individual or family who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Has an annual income below <u>30%</u> of median family income for the area; <u>AND</u></li> <li>(ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place defined in Category 1 of the “homeless” definition; <u>AND</u></li> <li>(iii) Meets one of the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Has moved because of economic reasons 2 or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for assistance; <u>OR</u></li> <li>B. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; <u>OR</u></li> <li>C. Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance; <u>OR</u></li> <li>D. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals; <u>OR</u></li> <li>E. Lives in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room; <u>OR</u></li> <li>F. Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care; <u>OR</u></li> <li>G. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient’s approved Con Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Category 2</b>	Unaccompanied Children and Youth	A child or youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under another Federal statute
	<b>Category 3</b>	Families with Children and Youth	An unaccompanied youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) or that child or youth if living with him or her.

**APPENDIX C: CROSS WALK OF HUD HOMELESS AND AT RISK DEFINITIONS AND ELIGIBILITY TO ESG PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

<b>Eligibility by Component</b>	<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	<p>Individuals and families defined as Homeless under the following categories are eligible for assistance in ES projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1: Literally Homeless</li> <li>• Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homeless</li> <li>• Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes</li> <li>• Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV</li> </ul>
	<b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>	<p>Individuals and families defined as Homeless under the following categories are eligible for assistance in RRH projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1: Literally Homeless</li> <li>• Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (if the individual or family is also literally homeless)</li> </ul>
	<b>Homelessness Prevention</b>	<p>Individuals and families defined as Homeless under the following categories are eligible for assistance in HP projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homeless</li> <li>• Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes</li> <li>• Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (if the individual or family is NOT also literally homeless)</li> </ul> <p>Individuals and families who are defined as At Risk of Homelessness</p> <p>Additionally, HP projects must only serve individuals and families that have an annual income BELOW 30% AMI</p>
	<b>Street Outreach</b>	<p>Individuals and families defined as Homeless under the following categories are eligible for assistance in SO projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1: Literally Homeless</li> <li>• Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (if the individual or family is also literally homeless)</li> </ul> <p>Additional limitations on eligibility within Category 1 require that individuals and families must be living on the streets (or other places not meant for human habitation) and be unwilling or unable to access services in emergency shelter.</p>

## APPENDIX D: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND PRIORITIZATION TOOL FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SYSTEM

### Eligibility Requirements

All potential clients will be screened for the following:

**Income** – Only households with income below 30% of the Area Median Income are eligible for Homelessness Prevention services (see Attachment A for income limits)

PLUS

**Trigger Crisis** – An event has occurred which is expected to result in housing loss within 30 days due to one of the listed reasons (see Attachment B for qualifying trigger crises)

PLUS

**No resources or support network to prevent homelessness** –No other options are possible for resolving this crisis. “But for this assistance” this household would become literally homeless—staying in a shelter, a car, or another place not meant for human habitation

OR

**Unaccompanied children and youth who qualify as homeless under another Federal statute** – See Runaway and Homeless Youth Act definition or Documentation for school district certification of homelessness (see Attachment C for other definitions of homelessness)

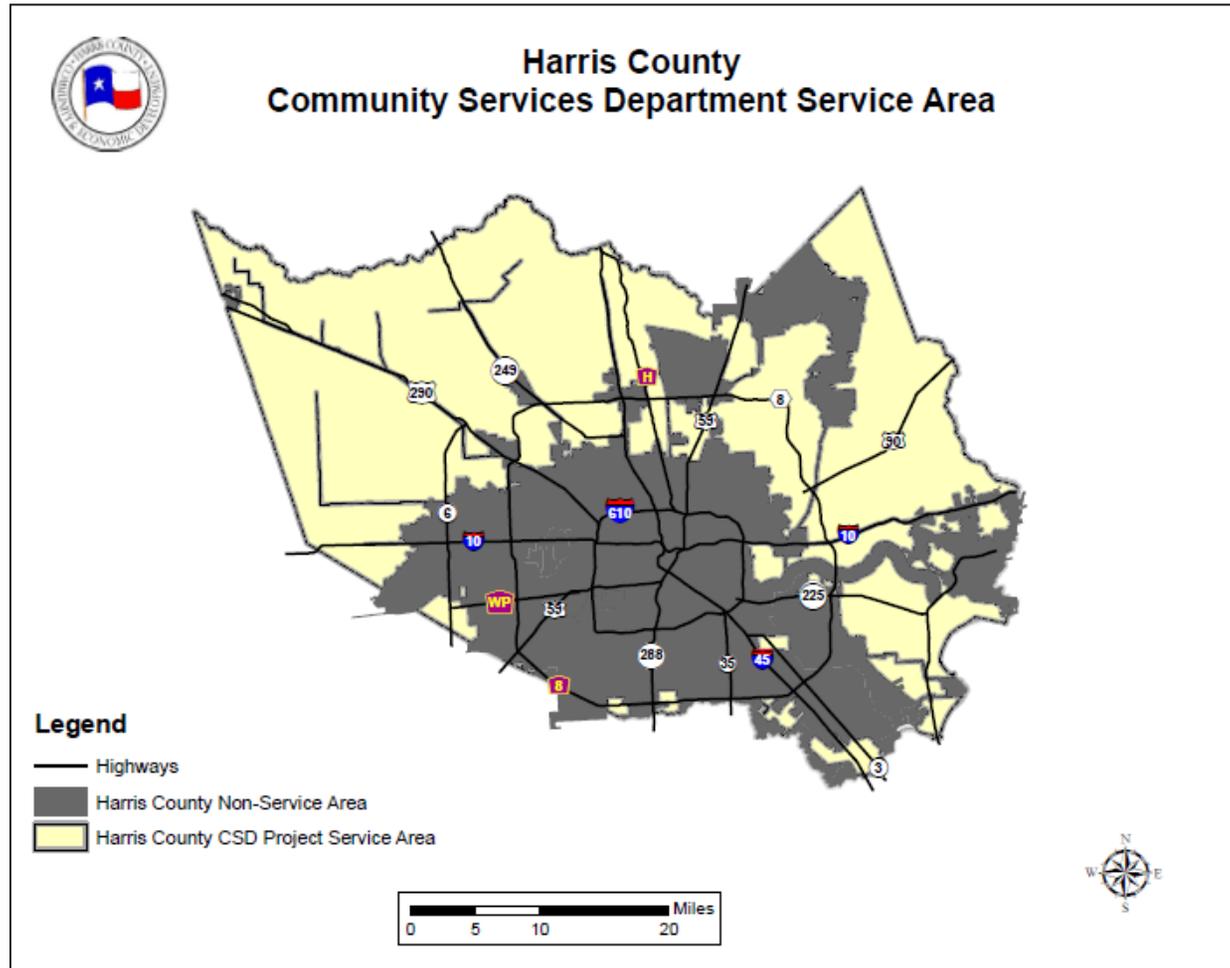
OR

**Families with children or youth who qualify as homeless under another Federal statute** –See Runaway and Homeless Youth Act definition or Documentation for school district certification of homelessness (see Attachment C for other definitions of homelessness)

PLUS

**Score of at least 20 points**—or 15 – 19 points with override sign-off (see Attachment D for score sheet)

APPENDIX E: SERVICE AREA MAP FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION



Note: This map is to be used to determine the service area of Harris County funded Homelessness Prevention projects.

## **Attachment A**

**30% Area Median Income** HUD provides current information for income limits on the HUD USER website at <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>. Note: The information that HUD provides on HUD USER website reflects data based on changes to the definition of “extremely low-income (ELI).” ESG recipients should continue to use data for Area Median Income (AMI) and not the new ELI data. For more information on this change, and to access the 30 % AMI tables, please refer to <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/impact-of-recent-changes-in-income-limits-and-utility-allowances>.

## Attachment B

### Trigger Crisis for Homelessness Prevention

Will lose housing within 30 days due to one of the following:

- Moved twice or more in the past 60 days
- Living in the home of another person because of economic hardship
- Notified that right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after date of application
- Living in hotel or motel and cost is not paid for by charitable organization or government program for low-income people
- Living in SRO or efficiency where more than 2 people live; or in a larger housing unit with more than 2 people per room
- Exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care
- Exiting a publicly or privately funded inpatient substance abuse treatment program or transitional housing program
- Living in rental housing that is being condemned by a government agency and tenants are being forced to move out

## Attachment C

### Other Definitions of Homelessness

- **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C 5701 et seq.)**

*Runaway and Homeless Youth* funding is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Information about Runaway and Homeless Youth program grantees is available online at <http://www2.ncfy.com/locate/index.htm>.

- **Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.)**

*Head Start* funding is administered by the Office of Head Start (OHS) within ACF/HHS. A listing of Head Start programs, centers, and grantees is available online at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>

- **Violence Against Women Act of 1994; subtitle N (42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.)**

*Violence Against Women Act* established the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). OVW administers financial and technical assistance to communities across the country that are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Currently, OVW administers one formula grant program and eleven discretionary grant programs, all of which were established under VAWA and subsequent legislation. More information about OVW is available online at <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>.

- **Public Health Service Act; section 330 (42 U.S.C. 254b)**

*The Public Health Service Act* authorized the Health Center Program, which is administered by the Bureau of Primary Health Care within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of HHS. Information about local Health Centers can be found online at <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/index.html>

- **Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.)**

*Food and Nutrition Act of 2008* relates to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps. SNAP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). More information about SNAP can be found online at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/>

- **Child Nutrition Act of 1966; section 17 (42 U.S.C. 1786)**

*Child Nutrition Act of 1966* authorized numerous programs related to school lunches and breakfasts and funds for meals for needy students. For more information about these programs, contact the local School Department.

- **McKinney-Vento Act; subtitle B of title VII (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)**

McKinney-Vento Act authorized the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, which is administered via the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education within the U.S. Department of Education. More information about this program is available online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>. Also, contact the local School Department.

## Attachment D

### Prioritization Scoring for Homelessness Prevention

#### Income Scoring

___	Rent burden at 66 – 80% of income....	5 points
___	Income at or below 15% AMI....	20 points OR
___	Income 16 – 29% AMI....	10 points

**15% Area Median Income** To determine income limits for 15% Area Median Income, refer to data for 30% Area Median Income and adjust proportionately. See Attachment A for more information on 30% Area Median Income. Please contact Harris County CSD Development staff if further assistance is needed.

**Attachment D continued**

**Tenant Barriers/Risk Factors Scoring**

<b>Tally</b>	<b>Screening Barrier</b>	<b>Points for Barrier</b>
_____	Eviction history	1 point
_____	No credit references: has no credit history	1 point
_____	Lack of rental history: has not rented in the past	1 point
_____	Unpaid rent or broken lease in the past (separate from current unpaid rent)	1 point
_____	Poor credit history: late or unpaid bills, excessive debt, etc	1 point
_____	Past Misdemeanors	1 point
_____	Past Felony other than critical Felonies listed below	1 point
_____	Exiting criminal justice system where incarcerated for less than 90 days	1 point
_____	Critical Felony (drugs, sex crime, arson, crimes against other people)	5 points
_____	Pregnant or has at least one child 0 – 6	5 points
_____	Head of household under 30 years old	5 points
_____	Family experienced literal homelessness in the past 3 years	5 points
_____	Only 1 adult in household	5 points
_____	<b>TOTAL (Tally of Income &amp; Tenant Barriers Scoring)</b>	

**Override**

If a household has 15 to 19 points but the agency believes there is a compelling reason to provide homelessness prevention services, the program can document reasons for overriding the score. The override must be signed off by an agency representative at a higher level of authority than direct service staff.