

MEMORANDU

M

FROM: Steve DiLella, Director of Individual & Family Support Programs

TO: DOH Funded Rapid Re-Housing Providers and CAN Staff

CC: Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Deputy Commissioner Shante Hanks, Leigh Shields-Church, Kara Capobianco, Katie Duran, Beau Anderson, Richard Cho (CCEH), Annie Stockton (CCADV), John Merz (ACT)

DATE: March 17, 2020

RE: Rapid Re-Housing Prioritization & Paperwork Requirements during States Declaration of Public Health & Civil Preparedness Emergency _____

Dear RRH Provider & CAN Staff:

Please share locally with your direct-service RRH staff.

For ongoing updates pertaining to the homeless service system, please see CCEH's Coronavirus and Homeless Resource Guide. Ongoing updates are also available on the State of Connecticut website. **The following protocols for DOH administered ESG/COC Rapid Re-Housing project will be in effect until the Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency enacted by Governor Lamont on March 10, 2020 is lifted.** We recognize that some of these measures seem extraordinary, but our hope is that over preparedness will offer the greatest safety to clients and staff. This is an unprecedented time for our Coordinated Access Network system, and decisions are being made in an effort to **prevent** the spread of COVID-19.

DOH's statewide goal is to utilize RRH when available to quickly exit as many households from shelters as possible. This will offer shelters the ability to increase personal space for shelter guests and reduce

the number of people in our congregate shelter settings.

***Note to CCADV RRH Providers:** CCADV will be sending parallel guidance with program specific notes. CCADV RRH paperwork requirements will be similar to those outlined below.

1) Effective immediately, Rapid Re-Housing Openings are to be prioritized for Individuals 60 years and

olde

r.

- Your CAN's BNL facilitator will be receiving a list of individuals 60+ years old currently enrolled in emergency shelter projects. Please utilize this list to effectively develop a housing plan for these individuals.
- To the extent possible, please leverage staff locally to rapidly exit individuals from shelter.

- Explain to households that the State is attempting to minimize the use of congregate living settings to prevent the potential spread of COVID 19. Shelters are to be used as an absolute last resort. If the person has anywhere else to stay, even temporarily, it is safer for the person.

2) To Rapidly Exit Families from shelter, continue to use CCEH's protocols for CCEH DOH Bezos Day One

matching funds. If you are a family shelter provider and do not currently have an MOU, please contact CCEH at assistance@cceh.org. Those providers who have an MOU for CCEH DOH Day One Rapid Exits, please review the application process, webinar, and MOU stipulations with your staff.

3) During this time of state enacted emergency, CCEH DOH Bezos Day One matching funds will also be

available for efforts to divert individuals. DOH Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno has directed that these matching funds be made available to divert individuals from homelessness. **This use for individuals will be covered under existing be homeful MOUs signed between CCEH and provider agencies.** These MOUs will be expanded to divert individuals from entering the CAN system, with a per household cap of \$2,500 for individuals (subject to exception requests on a case-by-case basis, as for families). For additional information, email assistance@cceh.org

If additional needs to access funding are identified, CCEH's **DOH Bezos Day One matching** *may* be extended to additional uses such as rapid exit for individuals. As of this writing, individuals in

need of rapid exit funding should draw down from an additional \$80,000 being released to the CANs (see below).

4) DOH is making an additional \$80,000 in RRH available to the CANs. These funds are being prioritized to

Northwest-CT, MMW, Central, Eastern (Northeast Region), and Greater Hartford CANs. These funds can be accessed by current RRH providers.

- Funds are intended to offer “rapid exit” assistance to households who only require a security deposit and 1 month’s rent resolve their homelessness.
- These funds will continue to be administered by your regional ESG provider:
 - Greater Hartford - CHR ○ Northwest – New Opportunities
 - Central – CHR ○ Eastern – WRCC ○ MMW – Columbus House
- Funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Use these funds to prioritize individuals 60+ years old.
- These funds will be administered centrally by ACT. ESG providers should continue to submit the abbreviated packets outlined below to ACT (see #5).
- DOH has identified additional RRH funding sources for the **Greater New Haven and Eastern (Southeast Region)**. Separate communications have been issued to these regions.
- DOH is working with the **Fairfield County CAN** to continue using existing rapid re-housing resources available.

5) **CoC / YHDP/ ESG RRH Paperwork Requirements for initial lease-up - Until Further Notice**

Until the State of CT lifts the Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency enacted by Governor Lamont on March 10, 2020, the following changes to RRH CoC /YHDP/ESG Funded projects administered by DOH have been enacted:

- At time of initial lease-up, only the following paperwork will be required: ○ Rapid Re-Housing Fund Request Checklist (page 1 only) ○ Homeless Verification ○ HQS Inspection ○ If in a coastal community, complete the CBRS Map ○ Rent Reasonableness Checklist ○ Lead Disclosure ○ Lease ○ Landlord W-9 ○ (YHDP) DOB Documentation ○ Complete program enrollment

in HMIS (“Statewide ESG Emergency Rapid Exit”) ○ Complete Financial Service Request (FSR) in HMIS

- In the event that staff are required to work from home by their agency of employment, electronic signatures are acceptable.
- Provide case management activities by phone and eliminate any routine face-to-face client contact.

6) For current RRH households expected to need ongoing rapid re-housing rental assistance, submit FSR

requests for April & May 2020 no later than March 25, 2020.

- You may request 100% of rent for ongoing renewals for April & May 2020. RRH providers do not need to submit renewal paperwork packets for April & May 2020.
- If you do not make the March 25th deadline, you may continue to submit the FSRs for April & May 2020. Our intent is to reduce paperwork burden to the provider with the hope that this will free your time to assist with exiting people from shelter.
- Applies to any clients who are currently at 22 months of assistance or less. Please ensure that no clients are receiving more than 24 months of rental assistance.
- ACT will not make rental assistance payments to landlords in advance. ACT will not be able to release payments to landlords until April 1, 2020 and May 1, 2020 respectively.

7) To Rapidly Exit youth from shelter, continue to use YHDP Rapid Exit and YHDP RRH funding. YHDP funding

remains limited to households where HOH is aged 18-24 at entry, but it’s permissible to add an older individual to the household (the older household member is ineligible for YHDP supportive services and providers can’t house the family in a larger unit based on this additional older member unless they wish to treat as a shared housing arrangement instead).

8) Exception Forms Suspended. For clients who are nearing their 1 yr program enrollment anniversary,

providers do **not** need to submit an Exception Form to continue to serve households with income at or below 50% AMI beyond 12 months. However, HUD continues to require that annual assessments (based on program enrollment date) be completed in HMIS and that annual HQS inspections be conducted for clients

who are receiving rental assistance beyond 12 months.

9) Please join DOH, ACT, and CCEH for a call on Thursday, 3/19 at 11:30am. This will be an opportunity for providers to ask any questions about the emergency enacted protocols listed above.

Please join us via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/699921949>

Meeting ID: 699 921 949 By Phone:

+16468769923,,699921949# US (New York)

10) DOH is working on the following and more information will be forthcoming once available:

- Identifying motel funding for individuals with a housing plan who are 60+ years of age.
- J. D'Amelia & Associates will be available to assist with completion of HQS inspection. Additional details to access these inspections services will be forthcoming.
- CCEH is approaching housing authorities about any vacancies they may be able to make available to people in shelters.

As always, if you have any immediate concerns, please contact Katie Durand (Kathleen.durand@ct.gov), Kara Capobianco (kara.capobianco@ct.gov) or Leigh Shields-Church (leigh.shields-church@ct.gov). Thank you for all of your flexibility, and efforts as we remain diligent in creating a safe environment for the people we serve and our staff.