



CT's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (CT HPRP)

Background

As a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (or the “stimulus package”), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was charged with administering just over one billion dollars in new funding for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). In Connecticut, a total of just over \$17 million of that funding was been awarded by HUD to the State of Connecticut’s Department of Social Services (DSS) and to five entitlement communities (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Waterbury).

Stated simply, our nation and more specifically our state, has a one- time opportunity to address an escalating crisis as families and individuals turn to an already overcrowded emergency shelter system. We can create lasting change by implementing a housing based, not a shelter based, intervention for those facing catastrophic housing and economic crisis in CT.

HPRP Basics

The program provides funding to assist both families and individuals who are at imminent risk of homelessness, or who are literally homeless. Examples of assistance provided includes:

Financial Assistance

- Rental assistance for a maximum of 18 months, including shallow (partial) subsidies, declining subsidies, and subsidies deeper than Section 8 subsidies
- Up to 6 months of back rent, which counts against the 18 month maximum
- Security and utility deposits
- Up to 18 months of utility payments, including up to 6 months of back utility payments
- Moving cost assistance (not furnishings)

Services

- Housing search and placement services, such as tenant counseling, representative payee services with respect to housing costs, and mediation and outreach to landlords
- Outreach and engagement
- Case management services
- Service coordination
- Legal services to help people stay in their housing (not assistance with mortgages)
- Credit repair, including money management and resolving personal credit issues

Population to be Served

CT's HPRP program will serve individuals or families that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Programs will target prevention to those who would be homeless "but for this assistance." Examples of risk criteria may include:

- Eviction within 2 weeks from a private dwelling (including housing provided by family or friends)
- Discharge within 2 weeks from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 180 days (including prisons, mental health institutions, and hospitals)
- Residency in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer meant for human habitation
- Sudden and significant loss of income
- Sudden and significant increase in utility costs
- Severe housing cost burden (greater than 50 percent of income for housing costs)
- Homeless in last 12 months
- Young head of household (under 25 with children or pregnant)
- Current or past involvement with child welfare, including foster care
- Extremely low income (less than 30 percent of Area Median Income)
- High overcrowding (the number of persons exceeds health and/or safety standards for the housing unit size)
- Credit problems that preclude obtaining of housing

CT's HPRP Programs and Services

Funds for CT HPRP are administered through the Department of Social Services (DSS) for six regional programs, and through the city governments of the five entitlement municipalities (Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Waterbury and Bridgeport). In most cases, services will be provided through several non-profit organizations in a given region or city.

United-Way's 211 will provide eligibility screening and referral to all of CT HPRP's programs

A portion of the DSS HPRP funds have been allocated to United Way to establish a new Homeless/Housing unit at 211. Trained specialists will screen for eligibility, refer those who are not eligible to other services, and connect eligible callers directly to the HPRP program in their area, as well as enter basic information about eligible callers into the CT Homeless Management Information System (CT HMIS). This new effort will create a "universal front door" for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness to quickly and accurately be assessed for connection to HPRP.

CT Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) and CT HPRP

CCEH, CT's statewide homeless coalition, is providing training and technical assistance for HPRP providers. As part of the National Alliance to End Homelessness' HPRP Technical Assistance Network, CCEH will have access to tools and best practices from around the country and be part of national workgroups on effective HPRP implementation. CCEH is continuing to develop an HPRP toolkit, which can also be accessed at <http://www.cceh.org/hprp.htm>.

In addition, CCEH will coordinate data collection, reporting and analysis for CT HPRP through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database and publish regular reports on CT HPRP and progress made towards the attainment of the CT HPRP Outcomes that have been established by DSS.

For more information regarding CCEH and HPRP, contact hprp@cceh.org.