



KICH

Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness

Introduction

Since 2013, the federal government, primarily under the auspices of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, has strongly encouraged Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless service providers and public housing authorities (PHA) to collaborate and implement homeless preferences within housing authorities' admission policies.¹ With the intent of targeting appropriate housing interventions to the appropriate homeless population, partnerships between CoCs and PHAs are established to formalize homeless households' access to permanently affordable housing. CoCs benefit by freeing up more intensive resources (i.e. Permanent Supportive Housing) for higher-need households, while PHAs also can benefit in several ways.

Benefits for PHAs in Partnering with CoCs

- Community-based referrals, resulting in a steady flow of applicants and tenants
- Assistance for clients with application paperwork and briefings
- Housing search assistance for private rental units
- Case management services during the transition
- Landlord/tenant/PHA mediation when necessary

Types of Partnerships Available to Local Communities

There are three types of PHAs, and that informs the types of partnerships that may be possible.

Public housing only: the PHA operates physical rental units (i.e. Housing Authority of Hazard)

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) only: the PHA distributes vouchers to be used in the private market

Combined: the PHA operates both public housing units and HCVs

For communities where long **Waiting Lists** are barriers to mainstream housing, HUD suggests the following partnerships:

1. Homeless service providers can help PHAs create a limited preference based on a referral source (either a specific homeless service provider, or the coordinated entry system lead).
2. PHAs can open and close their waiting lists frequently for preference populations (i.e. people on the coordinated entry prioritization list).²

Where PHAs want assistance with **Applications and Briefings**, they may be interested in these solutions:

1. Homeless service providers can help individuals with paperwork and eligibility screening.

¹ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013, November). *PHA Guidebook to Ending Homelessness*. Retrieved from USICH: https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/PHA_Guidebook_Final.pdf

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015, August 10). *The Business Case for Partnering with Public Housing Agencies to Serve People Who Are Homeless*. Retrieved from HUD Exchange: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/The-Business-Case-For-Partnering-With-Public-Housing-Agencies-To-Serve-Homeless.pdf>



2. Homeless service providers can attend the briefing process to help explain the process and requirements of the PHA.
3. PHAs can establish windows of time, rather than specific appointment times, for application and briefings.
4. PHAs and homeless service providers can co-locate office space to ensure seamless coordination of housing applications among people experiencing homelessness.³

PHAs operating HCV programs are tasked with striving for 100% **Voucher Utilization** rates. Here is how homeless service providers can assist with utilization rates and keeping people in qualifying units:

1. Homeless service providers can provide housing search and placement services.
2. Homeless service providers can pre-inspect units based on Housing Quality Standards, including either individual units based on client interest or creating a pool of units from which clients can choose.

Current Initiatives

In Kentucky, local partnerships between homeless service providers and PHAs are already underway. Some of these programs have been in place for several years, while others are new.

Housing Authority of Frankfort (Combined)

This small PHA has implemented a preference for persons experiencing homelessness in its public housing units, using the point application system. Additionally, in a pilot project, the PHA has set aside one unit to serve as a family emergency shelter unit based on referral from participating agencies.

Housing Authority of Hopkinsville (Combined)

This small PHA has designated five (5) HCVs for persons experiencing homelessness to be used in the private market.

Kentucky Housing Corporation (HCV Only)

The state housing finance agency, which also acts as the HCV PHA for 87 counties, has set aside 100 vouchers specifically for persons who have stabilized over time in CoC Permanent Supportive Housing, need minimal case management, but continue to need subsidized housing due to low or fixed income. The referral process involves a housing readiness assessment and a commitment to provide six months of transitional case management to the client.

Louisville Metro Housing Authority (Combined)

This large housing authority has designated 200 HCVs as part of the Louisville Metro Continuum of Care Move Up Program since 2016. Similar to the above example, this is designated for people ready to transition out of CoC-funded voucher programs. Participants must have been in a CoC program and the same unit for at least one year, have good rental history, currently receive income, and the referring agency must provide case management for at least three months.

³ Ibid.

Advice for Homeless Service Providers

- Find your local PHA's planning documents to determine where points of collaboration may be pursued. Conversely, you can use the document to see where people experiencing homelessness may be having difficulty accessing the PHA's application system.⁴
- Designate one person from your agency to build the relationship and serve as point of contact with the PHA.⁵
- Create a Memorandum of Understanding outlining each party's role and responsibility.
- Highlight your organization's capability of providing supportive services through the transition to the PHA's housing.
- Offer to provide housing stability/crisis intervention services for any PHA participant to the extent you are able based upon your organization's capacity and funding streams.⁶

Conclusion

Public housing and HCVs offer homeless service providers and our clients an opportunity to align missions to serve low-income Kentuckians, target appropriate housing interventions to housing-insecure households, and create stronger communities that respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Formalizing partnerships will promote equity in accessing mainstream housing benefits, allow providers to use higher-cost interventions for higher-need households, and allow communities to be more competitive in seeking federal funding, such as the Continuum of Care and continued HCV funding for PHAs.

About the Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness

Authorized by KRS 194A.735, the purpose of KICH is outlined as follows:

1. To serve as the single statewide homeless planning and policy development resource for the Commonwealth of Kentucky;
2. To review, update, and recommend changes to Kentucky's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and monitor its implementation;
3. To serve as a state clearinghouse for information on services and housing options for the homeless population;
4. To conduct other activities as appropriate and necessary; and
5. To report to the Governor and General Assembly as requested.

KICH is administered by the Homeless & Housing Coalition of Kentucky (HHCK). For more information, contact Adrienne Bush at 502-223-1834, ext. 101 or email at abush@hhck.org.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015, May). *CoC and PHA Collaboration: Strategies for CoCs to Start the Partnership Conversation*. Retrieved from HUD Exchange: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoC-and-PHA-Collaboration-Strategies-for-CoCs-to-Start-the-Partnership-Conversation.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015, August 10). *The Business Case for Partnering with Public Housing Agencies to Serve People Who Are Homeless*. Retrieved from HUD Exchange: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/The-Business-Case-For-Partnering-With-Public-Housing-Agencies-To-Serve-Homeless.pdf>