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**Coordinated System Flow:**

Step 1: Standardized access: Ensures all youth seeking access to their community’s homelessness system engage the system through the same coordinated and standardized process regardless of where or how they present for services.

Step 2: Standardized screening and assessment: Uses a standardized approach for all youth presenting for homelessness assistance to gather information on factors that can prevent and end their homelessness and inform the types of services and housing that meet their needs and strengths. **Youth should be assessed where they present** **whenever possible,** if that agency performs assessments and not sent to another assessing agency.

Step 3: Standardized prioritization: Ensures that youth with the most severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for limited housing and other non-emergency homelessness assistance resources (does not include emergency shelter, basic centers, street outreach, etc.) that meet their needs.

Step 4: Coordinated referral: Ensures that youth can be referred to any homelessness dedicated housing and services for which they qualify and are prioritized for across the entire community.

**Why Prioritization?**

Prioritization ensures that youth with the most severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for limited housing and homeless assistance resources that meet their needs and strengths and is the process by which a youth is placed in a relative order for referral to different types of housing and services.

Prioritization principles must be consistently applied and may reflect the following vulnerability factors:

* significant health or behavioral health challenges or functional impairments which require a significant level of support in order to maintain permanent housing;
* high utilization of crisis or emergency services, including emergency rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities to meet basic needs;
* the extent to which people, especially youth and children, are unsheltered;
* vulnerability to illness or death;
* risk of continued homelessness;
* vulnerability to victimization, including physical assault, trafficking, or sex work; or
* other factors determined by the community and based on severity of needs.

**Eligible Populations under the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project**

Communities awarded funds under the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) can serve

unaccompanied youth up to the age of 24, including pregnant and parenting youth, who meet **Category 1, 2, OR 4** of homelessness in HUD’s Final Definition of Homeless.

Category 1 – Literal Homelessness

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, in the following living situations:

• Shelter including emergency shelter, transitional housing, or hotel or motel paid by government or

charity;

• Street or other place not meant for human habitation (ex. car, garage, park, abandoned building); **OR**

• An institution (ex., jail, hospital, juvenile detention that the youth is exiting and where the youth was a resident for *90 days or less* **AND** the youth resided in emergency shelter or place not meant for human

habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.

Category 2 – Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, in the following living situations:

• In own housing, but being evicted within 14 days;

• A hotel or motel paid for by someone other than a government or charitable organization, including the youth, family, or friends where the youth cannot stay for more than 14 days (often due to lack of ability to continue paying); **OR**

• With family or friends and being asked to leave within 14 days, which includes:

* Youth staying with their biological parents, relatives, any individual they identify as family or a

Friend

* Youth who are moving from one home to another “couch surfing” and cannot stay at their current home or “couch”
* or Youth who are in a legal guardianship

Category 4 – Fleeing Violence

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, fleeing or attempting to flee their housing or the place they are staying because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions related to violence that has taken place in the house or has made them afraid to return to the house, including:

• Trading sex for housing;

• Trafficking;

• Physical abuse;

• Emotional abuse, such as threats, intimidation, and exposure to trauma;

• Family conflict that has caused a youth to feel physically or emotionally unsafe and unable to stay in

their current living situation;\*

• Financial abuse, such as controlling a youth’s income or stealing a youth’s identity in order use their

credit;

• Violence (or perceived threat of violence) because of the youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity;

• Active drug/illegal substance use in the youth’s current housing;

• Gang or neighborhood violence that is being directed to a youth in their home;\*\* OR

• Other illegal activity in the household that is putting a youth or a youth’s child at risk

Additionally, the youth must have no safe, alternative housing, resources or support networks to maintain or

obtain permanent housing.

*\*If youth are under the age of 18 you may be required to report family conflict resulting in abuse or*

*neglect to the local child welfare agency. It is important to understand the mandatory reporting laws for*

*child abuse and neglect in your local jurisdiction.*

*\*\*Gang or neighborhood violence has to be directed at the youth in their home not just in the general*

*community to be eligible under category 4.*

**YYA CE Permanent Housing Prioritization Recommendations:**

In identifying placements from the Coordinated Entry by-names list into YHDP Project placements, this community will prioritize the following, in a housing first\*, low-barrier, youth choice, and Multisite centralized access, meaning at several locations in a community, sometimes referred to as hubs or a hybrid approach.

**Specifically for TH:**

* youth identified with ***highest level of vulnerability score.***
  + and considering level of risk a YYA is currently presenting (case conferencing discussion)
  + and length of time homeless.
  + and, if two youth are presenting with a similar score and circumstance, the determining factor will be category of homelessness. Category 1 and 4 placed first, and then category 2.
* *High level of support*
* *Short- Medium term (6 months to 3 years) housing option, and opportunity to transition to Permanent housing through:*
  + *Gandara RRH*
  + *Dialself RRH*
  + *MHA PSH*

**Specifically for PSH*:***

Highest vulnerability score who has a diagnosed disability and is (in the following order):

1. Literally Homeless (meets category 1 - *All eligible youth and young adults who are eligible AND in category 1, must be housed before moving to the next eligible person*)
2. Fleeing Domestic Violence (meets category 4)
3. At imminent risk for homelessness (meets category 2)

*Case conferencing considerations:*

* 1. level of risk a YYA is currently presenting (case conferencing discussion)/vulnerability score
  2. and length of time homeless.
  3. and, if two youth are presenting with a similar score and circumstance, the determining factor will be category of homelessness. Category 1 and 4 placed first, and then category 2.

**Specifically for Rapid Rehousing:**

* youth identified with ***highest level of vulnerability score.***
  + and considering level of risk a YYA is currently presenting (case conferencing discussion)
  + and length of time homeless.
  + and, if two youth are presenting with a similar score and circumstance, the determining factor will be category of homelessness. Category 1 and 4 placed first, and then category 2.
* *For Dialself:*
  + *Individual*
  + *Short-Medium (up to 2 years) housing option.*
* *Gandara:*

1. *Family 1st, then*
2. *Individual*
   * *Medium term (up to 3 years) housing option.*

**MHA RRH Navigation Services:**

1. Youth and Young Adults on the by-names list (by highest vulnerability score) in need of housing and there are no YHDP housing project units available and there is a need to either finding housing and/or address barriers to housing placement, like:

* Legal or criminal concerns
* Poor or lack of landlord references
* Need for Identification (ID, birth cert, soc sec card, etc.) in order to sign own lease. ***(YYA will not be denied YHDP housing for lack of identification.)***
* Accessibility needs
* Other identified barriers to housing.
* Diversion
* Family connection
* Connection to mainstream benefits.

1. Youth who may only need brief housing intervention (3-6 month funding resources..1st, last, and security..etc)
   * youth referred to navigation services do not need to leave case management services provided through other agencies or funding sources. Navigation services do not take the place of traditional outreach or case management.
   * Navigators will also perform outreach to under-served locations within 3 county and provide assessment.

***Prioritization from Gandara TH or MHA RRH Navigators project***

Since YYA in these projects are not yet permanently housed, youth and young adults who are nearing the end of their participation in these projects should be reassessed for vulnerability and current living situated updated (in HMIS). At that point these youth will be prioritized in the same manner as all other youth on the by-names list.

\**see the Three County CoC Written Standards.*

**Three County YHDP Project Referral Process:**

Participants will be discussed during **Case Conferencing,** where a YYA identified on the by names list will be referred to an opening in a CoC funded project, depending on the participants needs and the identified prioritization process. Follow up will be discussed the following week(s) until a participant has been entered into a project and exited from CE (or moved depending on placement). ***Other housing and resource opportunities may also be identified for YYA on the by-names list, this referral process will be followed specifically for YHDP and CoC housing opportunities.***

**Universal & HUD (HMIS) project intake** should be taken by projects accepting referrals for their own programs. Any information that the referring program would like to provide, is subject to the referring programs policy and procedures. General demographic info is taken for the assessment in CE, but not the entire HUD intake. Eligibility documentation should be started by referring agencies to be sure they are referring eligible participants, and ultimately, it is the responsibility of the project accepting youth to know they meet eligibility and to be able to document this in their file.

Projects which are being referred youth from the by names list, and/or may be participants in another YHDP Project in which the subrecipient is the same agency (For example MHA’s Navigation to their PSH project) should have an internal, documented policy for how internal transfers will be made. Keep in mind that this agency must still follow the coordinated entry referral process and communicate with the CoC and CE partners at the time when a YYA is being considered for movement. If a program is referred a participant that is later referred to another program within the same agency, a new HUD intake is required, and a new case file created, to enter that participant into that specific program.

If a referring agency, or an agency who is working in case management or completed an assessment for a youth, (For example: Dial/Self) referred a client to the BNL and the client was then referred to a project within that agency, they may be conducting the HUD assessment for clients you referred to the BNL. However, there should be an internal plan for the timing of a transfer to the funded project versus outreach or case management programming that is funded through other means.

HMIS CE system assessment and events – taken by the assessor/referring agency

* Assessment
* Event
* Current living situation
* Exit

Funded Project representatives

* HUD intake
* Client file
* Any eligibility documents that were not able to be collected by referring agency.

**Documenting the Homeless Status of Youth:**

When serving youth experiencing homelessness, it is the intake worker’s responsibility to attempt to gather the highest level of documentation that can be safely obtained. Self-certification of status is **always** acceptable along with an intake worker’s attempt to verify or documented reasoning for not attempting to verify based on a safety risk to the youth. In the guidance below, the documentation is listed from the highest to lowest level of documentation.

Category 1 – Literal Homelessness

* Third party documentation, such as:
  + HMIS or victim services provider database printed record; **OR**
  + Written statement by housing or services provider such as homeless liaison, street outreach worker, or shelter provider; **OR**
* Intake worker direct observation recorded in the file; **OR**
* Certification of homelessness by youth **AND** documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information; **OR**
* If exiting institution –
  + Discharge paperwork or a written or oral statement from staff of the institution with beginning and end dates of the time the youth spent in the institution; **OR**
  + Certification by youth that they exited institution **AND** documentation of intake worker’s ***attempts*** to verify information. **ALSO** documentation of shelter or place not meant for human habitation prior to entering institution.

NOTE: A youth asking for emergency shelter or street outreach can self-certify their homelessness. This could be a sign-in sheet for shelter with a certification on top that the people signing in are homeless. No further documentation or attempts to verify are required to access emergency shelter.

Category 2 – Imminent Risk of Homelessness

* Documentation that youth will lose their housing within 14 days, which may include:
  + Notice of eviction or equivalent legal document; **OR**
  + Proof of inability to continue to pay for hotel or motel; **OR**
  + Statement by youth that they cannot continue to stay at the place they have been; **AND** written or oral verification from owner or renter of housing obtained by intake worker **OR** documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information;
* **And** documentation that the youth has no safe alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support network which can be self-certified by the youth. This can be self- certification.

**NOTE**: If a youth is staying with friends or family the youth only needs to report to the intake worker that they cannot stay for more than 14 days. The youth should be assessed and enter into coordinated entry based on their self-certification. The intake worker may attempt to contact the friend or family, *if safe to do so*, and document verification or attempt to verify at a later date.

Category 4 – Fleeing Violence

For providers that are not victim service providers:

* Statement by youth that they are fleeing because of violence, or other unsafe situations; **AND**
* If the safety of the youth is not jeopardized, verification of the statement through written observation by the intake worker or staff at other organizations including law enforcement, housing or service provider, social worker, homeless liaison or legal assistance provider youth has sought assistance from **OR** documentation of intake worker’s ***attempts*** to verify information and certification of the statement by the youth or intake worker; **AND**
* Youth’s self-certification that the youth has no safe alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support networks. The intake worker should obtain any available documentation or statements supporting the youth’s certification.

For victim service providers:

* Statement by youth that they are fleeing domestic or other violence; **AND**
* Certification of the statement by the youth or intake worker; **AND**
* Youth’s self-certification that the youth has no safe alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support networks. The intake worker should obtain any available documentation or statements supporting the youth’s certification.

**NOTE:** An intake worker should make ***no attempt*** to verify the unsafe situation if doing so would put the youth at any risk of harm – in these case the self-certification and a note in the file that verification would risk the youth’s safety is all the documentation needed.

Also when documenting for category 4, the intake worker needs to ask only enough questions to know what is going on – they should rely on the youth’s own statement about his or her feelings and concerns. If the youth indicates there is a safety risk then no further documentation of the safety risk is needed – the intake worker simply document what the youth stated.