

UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM STANDARDS

1. Applicable Programs

These program standards apply to leased rooms or motel vouchers for which United Community Action Partnership provides intake, assessment, and case management services. This includes the following motel voucher or emergency shelter room programs:

- Meeker Area Ministries (MAM) Rooms in Litchfield
- Safe Harbor Rooms in Willmar
- The Refuge in Marshall
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Motel Vouchers
- Homeless Youth Act (HYA) Motel Vouchers (under age 25)
- Salvation Army Motel Vouchers
- Motel vouchers paid through county discretionary funds

Any specific funder requirements (such as with Salvation Army vouchers) will take precedence over these program standards. These rooms and motel vouchers may be used for adult or youth singles, families with children, or couples with no children as dictated by funder requirements.

2. Prioritization

Since requests for assistance generally exceed the number of rooms and the amount of funding available, priority will be given to the following populations, though these are not required characteristics for admission:

- Families with children,
- People fleeing domestic violence,
- People with disabilities,
- Youth,
- Chronically Homeless families and individuals who have the longest histories of homelessness/most previous episodes of homelessness
- Those who are unsheltered or in a place not meant for human habitation.

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3. Eligibility Requirements

a. **No Other Resources Available –**

The household must lack the resources or support networks needed to resolve the situation on their own.

If a household has not yet lost their housing, United staff will work with them to see if any available prevention measures (County EA, FHPAP, discretionary funds, setting up a payment plan, borrowing money from family/friends, etc.) could be used to prevent the eviction.

If a household has already lost their housing, staff will work with them to identify other safe housing options first. This could include helping them call family and friends to find another housing option, providing them a landlord list and/or information on current apartment openings, or providing mediation with a landlord.

Only after staff has worked with the participant to evaluate other prevention and diversion options and have determined they are not feasible should they consider emergency shelter options.

b. **Meets Homeless Definition –**

Households must meet one of the following homeless definitions and the situation must be adequately documented:

HUD Homeless Definition:

- Literally Homeless (Category 1) – An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:
 - Sleeping in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation,
 - Living in a shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements,
 - Exiting an institution (e.g., jail, hospital) where they resided for 90 days or less and were residing in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering the institution.
- Imminent Risk of Homelessness (Category 2) – Individuals/families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and have no subsequent residence identified and lack the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

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- Homeless under other Federal Program (Category 3) – Unaccompanied youth under 25 or families with children and youth who do not otherwise qualify as homeless, but who:
 - Meet homeless definition under another federal statute, and
 - Have not had lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing any time during the last 60 days, and
 - Have experienced two or more moves during last 60 days, and
 - Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.
- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence (Category 4) – Individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence, who have no identified subsequent residence and lack the resources and support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Minnesota Homeless Definition:

- Any individual, unaccompanied youth, or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation." This includes "doubling-up" if the situation has persisted for less than one year.

c. Documentation of Homelessness –

Participants must provide documentation of their housing crisis. Documentation should be obtained according to HUD's order of preference, which is:

1. Third-party documentation (letter/email from another service provider, institution, court paperwork for eviction, etc.),
2. Intake worker observations,
3. Certification from the person seeking assistance.

d. Minnesota Residency –

Participants must provide verification that they have been a Minnesota resident for at least 30 days before they can receive service. Acceptable documentation can include any document generated by someone other than the participant or their friends or family that shows the client's name, a date 30 days prior to the request for assistance, and a Minnesota address (does not include a PO BOX). Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Utility Bill,

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- Driver's License,
- Lease,
- Printout of benefits from County Human Services, or
- Written statement provided by other service provider verifying residency.

Self-declarations or letters from family or friends are not acceptable forms of documenting residency.

If a participant has not been a Minnesota resident for at least 30 days, United staff may serve them with a motel voucher from Salvation Army (in accordance with the applicable Salvation Army policies) or with other United discretionary funds for up to three nights if funds are available.

4. Required Paperwork

The following paperwork should be included with each participant file. Verifications and documentation should be obtained prior to providing service.

- Universal housing File Cover Sheet
- UCAP Intake Form
- Emergency Housing Application
- Releases of Information
- Tennessen Warning
- Room/Apt contract (shelter only)
- HMIS Consent
- UCAP Needs Assessment / Checklist
- Data Privacy and appeals process (client Keeps)
- Documentation of housing crisis (homeless or past due/ eviction notice)
- Documentation of **CAUSE** of crisis (repair bill, medical need, loss of wages)
MUST SHOW PROOF
- Income Documentation/Certification of Zero Income
- Verification of County Assistance (EA) application status
- Targeting Points worksheet (points only matter for FHP)
- Coordinated Entry Assessment

1. Service Delivery Guidelines

a. Program Staff Responsibilities

- i. Maintain confidentiality in regards to all information released to United by participants in accordance with applicable laws and United agency policies,
- ii. Assist participants in developing a plan to obtain housing,

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- iii. Support and empower participants in carrying out their housing plan,
- iv. Assess each household's situation holistically in order to provide appropriate referrals and information for other needed services,
- v. Program and/or property staff will visit the room at least once per week to ensure the participant is maintaining a clean room and following program requirements,
- vi. Program staff will inform participants of expectations for frequency and method of contact.

b. Participant Responsibilities

- i. See Room Contract (Appendix A)

2. Length of Service

The length of program assistance will be based on the participant's progress, compliance, and funding restrictions. For stays over seven days, progress and compliance will be re-evaluated weekly to determine if additional time will be granted.

United staff will work to limit the length of stay in the program as much as possible by supporting, equipping, and empowering participants in carrying out their housing plan.

3. Animal Policy

No animals of any kind are allowed at any time in any room provided by United unless the animal is a **certified service animal**. Participant must make other arrangements for them prior to entering the room. Violation of this policy may result in immediate termination from the program.

4. Visitor Policy

The only person/people allowed to stay in any room provided by United are those approved by United at intake and listed on the program application. No guests without prior approval from United are allowed at any time. Violation of this policy may result in immediate termination from the program.

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5. Termination of Assistance

United staff will make every effort to avoid terminating services by supporting, equipping, and empowering participants to exit the program successfully. However, there are situations that will warrant termination. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Property manager, landlord, or owner demands immediate removal from the premises,
- Damaging or stealing property or failing to maintain a clean room,
- Illegal drug activity or alcohol consumption on the property,
- Violation of animal policy,
- Violation of guest policy,
- Threats or acts of violence against United or property staff or other guests/tenants,
- Participant is arrested and incarcerated,
- Failure to attend scheduled meetings, not returning phone calls, or otherwise not maintaining contact with United staff as agreed upon at intake,
- Failure to follow-through on agreed-upon plan,
- Failure to provide required documentation/verifications or providing misinformation.

If a participant does not agree with a decision regarding their program eligibility or involvement, they may request an appeal in accordance with United's agency appeals process.