

Purpose

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program (see [Notice PIH 2021-15](#) for details) is a new housing voucher program that is funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and provides 70,000 housing vouchers through Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to assist people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness; are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless. Implementation of these vouchers must be done in partnership with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Victim Services Providers (VSPs). The [Emergency Housing Vouchers Webinar Series](#) provides information highlighting key elements of PIH Notice 2021-15 to help PHAs, CoCs, VSPs, and other community partners prepare for EHVs.

The [Partnerships for EHVs](#) webinar helps prepare participants to identify and engage with key partners (including PHAs, CoCs, and VSPs) to initiate planning for the implementation for EHVs. The webinar also highlighted partner presentations from the perspectives of anti-trafficking providers, VSPs, and PHA/CoC collaborations.

EHV Partnership Requirements

Per [Notice PIH 2021-15](#), PHAs are required to partner with the CoC and other organizations for direct referrals and services. Requirements for partners planning for and implementing EHVs include:

- PHAs must work with community partners to **determine the best use and targeting for EHVs** along with other resources available in the community. The four eligible populations are:
 1. Homeless.
 2. At risk of homelessness.
 3. Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
 4. Recently homeless, as determined by the Secretary, and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's being homeless or having a high risk of housing instability.

When contemplating local preferences, HUD strongly encourages PHAs and their partners to take into consideration the comparative health risks that COVID-19 poses to the subgroup of families eligible for EHVs (e.g., individuals or families living in environments where practicing social distancing or taking other preventive measures may be particularly challenging). For more information, see [Strategy for Targeting EHVs and Related Resources](#).

- PHAs must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their community's CoC to establish a partnership for the administration of the EHVs.
- PHAs must accept direct referrals from the CoC's coordinated entry (CE) system.
- In addition, the PHA must also take **direct referrals from outside the CE system** in the following cases:
 - If the CE system does not have a sufficient number of eligible families to refer to the PHA.
 - If the CE system does not identify families that may be eligible for EHV assistance because they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, in which case referrals should come from a VSP or an anti-trafficking service provider.
- CoCs are responsible for **determining whether the family qualifies** under one of the four eligibility categories for EHVs and providing supporting documentation to the PHA.
- CoCs are also responsible for **making direct referrals** of families to the PHA through the CE system.
- Partners must review and decide on the **services** and activities that each partner will assist with or provide in the administration of EHVs (from outreach to move-in).

MOU: Deeper Dive

PHAs that agree to accept an EHV allocation must enter into an MOU with a partnering CoC within 30 days of the effective date of the Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) funding increment for the EHV (July 1); therefore, MOUs must be signed by July 31, 2021.

Minimum required components of the MOU include:

- Goals and standards of success in administering the EHV.
- Key lead staff from each agency/entity.
- A statement that all parties agree to cooperate with any program evaluation efforts undertaken by HUD, or a HUD-approved contractor, including compliance with HUD evaluation protocols and data sharing requests.
- The specific population eligible/prioritized for EHV that will be referred to the PHA by the CoC or other partnering referral agency.
- The services, including financial assistance, that will be provided to assist EHV applicants and participants and who will provide them.
- The roles and responsibilities of the PHA and CoC, including but not limited to the CoC making direct referrals of families to the PHA through the CE system.

Partnerships: Lessons Learned

- Meet regularly and as often as needed.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities.
- Identify a single point of contact for each partner.
- Engage in level setting: PHA and CoC “languages” are different.
- Do not assume your partners know what is important to you.
- Set goals (e.g., specific timeframes and metrics).
- Track goals (e.g., using a shared spreadsheet).
- Expand partnerships as needed to meet the needs of participants.

Partner Perspectives

Karen Romero, Freedom Network USA

- The majority of anti-trafficking service providers are not housing providers.
- Most anti-trafficking service providers are not connected to CoCs or PHAs.
- Service providers lack knowledge of voucher processes.
- PHA’s and CoCs lack knowledge of human trafficking.
- Key tips:
 - Create a process that works for all survivors, not just one specific population or set of individuals.
 - Be intentional about establishing relationships with anti-trafficking providers.
 - Invite and include service providers.
 - Rely on trafficking providers to help verify that households meet the eligibility criteria. Assessing for human trafficking can be a traumatizing experience, so it’s helpful to have an anti-trafficking provider that is already working with survivors certify eligibility to avoid causing additional trauma.
- Human Trafficking Resources:
 - Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grantees: <https://ovc.ojp.gov/matrix-ovc-funded-human-trafficking-services-grantees-and-task-forces>.
 - OVC awards by state: <https://ovc.ojp.gov/states>.
 - Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Program: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/map/domestic-victims-human-trafficking-program-grantees>.
 - Trafficking Victims Assistance Program: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/contact-information/resource/trafficking-grantee-map>

Monica McLaughlin, National Network to End Domestic Violence

- Housing is central to the safety, stability, and long-term well-being of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.
- The domestic violence field has made a lot of connections to PHAs and CoCs in many places, but not all. Partnerships with culturally specific providers are emerging as well, and it is important to ensure that these providers are at the table when you are thinking about how to most effectively serve all survivors.
- Connect with your state’s Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions: [Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Grants and Programs](#).
- Connect with your local and culturally specific VSPs.
- Check out the National TA Safe Housing Partnerships framework: <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/>

Mark Thiele, Executive Director, Houston Housing Authority, and Jessica Preheim, Coalition for the Homeless, Houston

- Always start with the data—what is going on, what do you know about your population? What do you know about your jurisdiction?
- When you are up against a challenge, think about how you can address it with energy, excitement, and with your resident and consumer first.
- In 2012, Houston started with the goal of “100 in 100”: house 100 chronically homeless Houstonians, at least 60 of whom are veterans, in 100 days. Since then it has been a trajectory—we are in it for the long-term. We have a huge team, and we are constantly adding additional partners; the collaboration can really help.
- When you can, outsource some of your work to partners who can do it even better. We have partners who help vulnerable clients fill out paperwork, navigate folks from unit to unit, and help solve problems.
- In 2015, Houston declared an effective end to veteran homelessness and housed 3,650 homeless veterans in just over three years. Since starting a partnership with the CoC and PHA in 2014, we have collectively housed 21,000 individuals and reduced our overall homeless count by 54 percent!