



# Lake County Coalition for the Homeless Moving Up Program Manual

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## Intro

### Terms

**Continuum of Care (CoC):** A regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

**Housing Placement Work Group (HPWG):** The subcommittee of the System Coordination and Entry Committee that is responsible for collectively case conferencing the by-name list in order to end chronic homelessness in Lake County.

**Lake County Coalition for the Homeless (LCCH):** Lake County’s Continuum of Care.

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Housing intervention which includes intensive services and a permanent housing subsidy.

**Providers:** For the purposed of this document, “Providers” refers to Lake County’s CoC agencies that provide permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing.



Public Housing Agency (PHA) (also known as Public Housing Authorities): Agencies designated to administer public housing programs in a jurisdiction. Lake County has three public housing agencies: Lake County Housing Authority, Waukegan Housing Authority, North Chicago Housing Authority.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH): Housing intervention which includes services and a diminishing housing subsidy.

ServicePoint: Software system utilized as Lake County's Homeless Management Information System.

System Coordination and Entry Committee (SCEC): Lake County Coalition for the Homeless committee responsible for management of the coordinated entry process.

## Background

The Moving Up Program is designed to help transition permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH) tenants away from the intensive support of these programs and towards living independently in the community. Communities across the country have implemented similar programs (sometimes called "Moving On" programs or "FLOW" programs) and have found the programs to be beneficial to all parties involved, including tenants, housing providers, and public housing agencies. In addition to helping tenants who desire more independence, these programs free up PSH and RRH units for families that need intensive services and help ensure that new participants of public housing agencies are set up to succeed. Tenants are likely to succeed because Moving Up participants are selected based on their history of compliance with housing programs and are accompanied by six months of supportive services to assist with the various needs that may arise while transitioning to a new home and a new community.

Moving Up is a collaboration between the Lake County Coalition for the Homeless (LCCH), CoC housing providers, and public housing agencies (PHA). LCCH serves as the main point of contact for the program and provides program oversight through the System Coordination and Entry Committee and Housing Placement Work Group. PSH providers identify and screen applicants and provide supportive services for six months after the tenant transitions into the new unit. Public housing agencies provide housing choice vouchers which enable clients to live independently in affordable housing.

## Overview of Process

1. Providers identify appropriate candidates, discusses options with them and lets tenants opt in.
2. Provider completes Participant Evaluation Tool (PET) and sends referral in ServicePoint.
3. Referrals are reviewed at Housing Placement Work Group to screen applicants using tool and criteria in policies. Tenants will only be selected for Moving Up if all group members agree that they will be successful.
4. PHA notifies LCCH of available voucher.
5. Housing Placement Work Group selects candidates at next meeting.
6. Tenant is notified and accepts.
7. Tenant information is sent to PHA. Tenant case manager works to complete PHA application and documentation checklist required by PHA.
8. Tenant attends PHA briefing and receives voucher.
9. Tenant finds apartment.
10. Apartment is inspected by PHA.
11. Case manager provides services to assist with transition and 6 months following move-in.



## Program Partner Roles

### *Responsibilities of Moving Up Program Participants*

- Work with their case manager to complete the Participant Evaluation Tool
- Complete the PHA housing choice voucher application
- Attend PHA briefing
- Submit all required documents to the PHA
- Find a unit in the community
- Pay a rental application fee, security deposit, and costs associated with moving
- Pay their rent each month

### *Responsibilities of the Lake County Coalition for the Homeless System Coordination and Entry Committee (SCEC) and Housing Placement Work Group (HPWG)*

- Serve as the main point of contact for the public housing agency
- Review Participant Evaluation Tools and select appropriate candidates (members of the work group must abstain from discussion of applicants who participate in PSH programs administered by a member's place of work)
- Address program issues as they arise
- Evaluate the program for effectiveness and take steps to adjust as necessary
- Provide data consistent with the PHA's Mainstream Voucher Program Evaluation Plan where necessary
- Execute an MOU with each provider that confirms LCCH responsibilities regarding this program

### *Responsibilities of Providers*

- Explain the Moving Up program to interested applicants
- Work with the applicant to complete the Participant Evaluation Tool
- If applicant's evaluation tool is recommended, assist the applicant in the PHA application process, including attending briefings with the applicant
- If applicant is accepted into the HCV program, assist the Moving Up participant to find a unit and move in
- Provide supportive services for six months after move-in
- Serve as the liaison between the participant and the Coalition
- Execute an MOU with LCCH that confirms provider responsibilities when utilizing this program

### *Responsibilities of Public Housing Agencies*

- Notify the Coalition when a unit is available (or accept applications on a rolling basis)
- Receive referrals from the coalition
- Contact the case manager if there is an issue with the applicant
- Contact the case manager if there is an issue with the tenant after move-in

## Program Participants

### Eligibility Criteria for PSH

Moving Up participants must be motivated and have demonstrated self-sufficiency. At the minimum, all participants must:



- Have expressed interest in living independently in the community
- Have been in a PSH program for a minimum of 2 years (this can be waived for exceptional applicants)
- Have a continuous, ongoing source of income
- Have successfully paid rent on time and in full every month for past 12 months (without reminder)
- Be connected to mainstream or community resources

### Eligibility Criteria for RRH

Participants moving up from RRH experience a different set of circumstances. At this time, LCCH needs more information to solidify the eligibility criteria. Generally, a participant moving on from RRH cannot sustain their unit with their current income and is not able to increase their income. LCCH asks that a subgroup of HPWG review applications and agrees upon eligibility criteria that can be incorporated into this document at a later date.

Additionally, all participants must meet all eligibility criteria for a housing choice voucher:

- Have not been evicted from federally-assisted housing for the manufacture of methamphetamine
- Is not a lifetime registered sex offender
- Meet other requirements of housing authorities as necessary

Please note that participants in this program will be given a housing choice voucher (HCV) and be required to find a private unit in the community. HCV participants are not guaranteed a unit, and while a tenant may meet the eligibility requirements to be accepted into the program, private landlords may have additional screening criteria that may disqualify a tenant from a private unit.

### Participant Selection

#### *Participant Evaluation Tool*

The Participant Evaluation Tool serves as the application for the program and gathers data that will help the Housing Placement Work Group determine if the applicant is an appropriate candidate for Moving Up, including the applicant's PSH history, healthcare utilization needs, and connections to the community. The tool must be submitted in ServicePoint, along with proof of income and the consent form.

If a PSH/RRH tenant has indicated they would be interested in the Moving Up Program, their case manager will need to submit the Participant Evaluation Tool on behalf of the client to be reviewed the HPWG. The case manager should consider the following:

- The participant has connections in the community beyond the housing program; for example, family, a doctor, psychiatrist, friends, church, and/or a community group that he/she engages with regularly.
- The participant has expressed interest in living in independent housing.
- The participant can afford the cost of moving, including a security deposit, rental application fees, and furniture.
- The participant is able to get utilities in his/her name and can pay for those additional costs if not included in the rent.
- The participant is able to manage a monthly budget and pay bills on time without assistance.



- The participant is able to navigate public transportation or get to appointments without assistance.
- The participant is able to maintain their housing in a clean-enough state to pass Housing Authority inspection and not risk eviction.
- The participant is able to shop for food and cook for him or herself.
- The participant does not have a history of disruptive behavior or excessive traffic in and out of his/her apartment.

#### *Application submission:*

Depending on the preference of the Housing Authority, Participant Evaluation Tools will be accepted either on a rolling basis or during a designated application period.

- Rolling Basis: Case managers may submit a Participant Evaluation Tool to the HPWG whenever a PSH/RRH participant wishes to apply and their case manager believes they may be appropriate for the program.
- Application Period: When vouchers become available, the Housing Placement Work Group will notify providers that they are accepting Participant Evaluation Tools. Once the application period is over, the HPWG will review all Participant Evaluation Tools.

#### *Application Approval:*

The HPWG will review the Participant Evaluation Tool and determine if the candidate is appropriate for the program. Moving Up candidates will be stable, well connected to community resources, and have a desire to transition out of their permanent supportive housing placement.

#### *Application Expiration and Reapplication:*

It is important that the HPWG has access to the most up-to-date information at the time a program candidate is referred to the housing authority. To that end, if an applicant is approved when there are no units available, the HPWG will set an “expiration date” for the application. If a unit becomes available prior to the expiration date, the candidate will be referred to the housing authority. If a unit does not become available prior to the expiration date, the candidate will need to reapply.

If the HPWG determines that a candidate is not appropriate for the program, the applicant will be notified that they will not be referred to the housing authority at this time. The notification will also describe the reason the applicant was not approved so that the case manager can work with the client to improve their application in the future.

#### *Prioritization Criteria*

If Moving Up demand exceeds the supply of available vouchers, applicants will be prioritized according to their stability in housing. The Housing Placement Work Group will prioritize candidates from most to least stable based on past performance as indicated in the Participant Evaluation Tool.

### *Program Evaluation*

The SCEC and/or Housing Placement Work Group will review HMIS data every quarter to determine whether the Moving Up Program is successful. Metrics reviewed include:

- Number of Participant Evaluation Tools submitted/number accepted



- Number of referrals sent to the PHA/ number accepted
- Number of tenants able to find a unit in the community

If any metrics indicate an issue with the process, the program manual will be updated and procedure will adjust as necessary.

*Portions of this Program Manual have been adapted from the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County's FLOW Voucher Initiative Policies and Procedures Handbook. The Lake County Coalition for the Homeless thanks the Alliance for sharing their program materials.*