

Temporary Amendment to Westchester Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Policy Manual

Incorporating COVID-19 Risk Factors in Prioritization for Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing

HUD Guidance: On 5/8/2020 HUD issued guidance to CoCs urging them to temporarily adjust their Coordinated Entry procedures to prioritize those at highest risk of death from COVID-19, based on CDC Guidance.¹

Temporary Amendment to Westchester County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Policy Manual:

This temporary amendment to the Westchester County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Policy Manual will be in effect beginning 7/21/20 and until such time as Westchester County is declared to have removed all COVID-19 related restrictions through the New York State Regional Reopening plan. If new COVID-19 restrictions are later enacted in Westchester County this temporary amendment will automatically go back into effect.

The participants will still need to meet the requirements of any vacancy to which they may be referred.

The following changes are made to the prioritization for Permanent Supportive Housing (changes highlighted):

1) When Chronically Homeless individuals or families are located within the geographic area of the CoC, Westchester County CoC will place individuals in **PSH units dedicated or prioritized for persons experiencing chronic homelessness or meeting the definition of DedicatedPLUS** in the following order:

1. CH/DedicatedPLUS individuals and families who match the goals and any identified target populations served by the project with the most severe needs (PSH score of 5+ using Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool). and then sorted by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by length of time homeless.
2. CH/DedicatedPLUS individuals and families who match the goals and any identified target populations served by the project sorted by PSH score from the Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool and then by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by length of time homeless.

2) Westchester County CoC will place individuals in **PSH units not dedicated or not prioritized for persons experiencing chronic homelessness or meeting the definition of DedicatedPLUS** in the following order; in addition, Westchester County CoC will place individuals in **PSH units dedicated or prioritized for persons experiencing chronic homelessness or meeting the definition of DedicatedPLUS** when there are no CH/DedicatedPLUS individuals and families who match the goals and any identified target populations served by the project in the following order:

1. Homeless individuals and families with a disability who have been homeless for more than 365 days and with the most severe needs (PSH score of 5+ using Westchester Comprehensive

¹ "COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Changes to Coordinated Entry Prioritization to Support and Respond to COVID-19," HUD, found at

https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Changes-to-Coordinated-Entry-Prioritization-to-Support-and-Respond-to-COVID-19.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=7b3d12845b-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-05-08-2020_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-7b3d12845b-19290641

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Homeless Assessment Tool) and then sorted by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by length of time homeless.

2. Homeless individuals and families with a disability who have been homeless for less than 365 days and with the most severe needs (PSH score of 5+ using Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool) and then sorted by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by length of time homeless.
3. Homeless individuals and families with a disability coming from emergency shelters or places not meant for human habitation sorted by PSH score from the Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool and then by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by length of time homeless.
4. Homeless individuals and families with a disability coming from transitional housing sorted by PSH score from the Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool and then by COVID-19 risk tier (see below) and then by amount of time homeless.

The following changes are made to the prioritization for Rapid Re-housing (changes highlighted):

Westchester County CoC will prioritize individuals and families for Rapid Re-housing in the following order:

1. Homeless individuals and families with the highest need for Rapid Rehousing interventions by sorting from highest to lowest Westchester Comprehensive Homeless Assessment Tool RRH score COVID-19 risk tier (see below).
2. Homeless individuals and families that have been homeless for the longest amount of time.

Definition of High Risk factors for COVID-19 severe illness: Westchester Continuum of Care will use current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to determine who is High Risk.²

“People at increased risk for severe illness” from COVID-19 are:

- “Older adults (defined locally as those 65 years and older) [are] at highest risk”
- “People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
 - Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Type 2 diabetes mellitus”

² “People Who Are At Higher Risk For Severe Illness [From COVID-19]”, CDC, found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

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COVID Risk Tiers:

Based the CDC guidance, and recommendations from the Westchester County Department of Health, persons experiencing homelessness on the Coordinated Entry priority list will be sorted into four tiers of COVID-19 Risk for severe illness.

Tier 1: Aged 65+ with 1 or more other documented risk factors

Tier 2: Aged 65+ with no other risk factors

Tier 3: Under Age 65 with 1 or more other documented risk factors

Tier 4: Under Age 65 and with no other risk factors

As indicated above, Coordinated Entry will use COVID risk tier to break ties among all participants with the same CHAT score (Length of Time Homeless will break ties among participants with the same CHAT score *and* COVID risk tier).

[PSH CHAT scores of 5+ will continue to be treated as the same score.]