

Downtown Rising Initiative Prioritization Policy Addendum

Purpose

This policy addendum outlines the incorporation of the Downtown Rising Initiative into the Coordinated Entry System's (CES) prioritization policy. Its purpose is to ensure that individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness in designated Downtown zones are prioritized for permanent housing interventions, in alignment with local strategic goals to reduce unsheltered homelessness and support community revitalization.

Scope

This policy addendum applies exclusively to clients engaged in the Downtown Rising Initiative and outlines prioritization for permanent housing programs, including Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH).

Policy Statement

To support the goals of the Downtown Rising Initiative and ensure coordinated, equitable housing placements, the following policies are established:

1. Assessment Tool and Eligibility

- All clients engaged through the Downtown Rising Initiative will be assessed using the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT).
- Clients who are chronically homeless, per the HUD Definition of Chronic Homelessness, and have a VI-SPDAT score of 11 or higher, will be eligible for PSH or comparable OPH projects.
- Clients who are not chronically homeless or are chronically homeless with a VI-SPDAT score below 11, will be prioritized for RRH.

2. Referral Prioritization and Ratio Model

- A **one-to-one referral ratio** will be implemented to ensure equitable access between Downtown Rising clients and the general CES Housing Queue.
 - **PSH/OPH Referrals:** One Downtown Rising client will be referred to for every client from the general Housing Queue.

- **RRH Referrals (Non-Designated Units):** When no designated Downtown Rising RRH or equivalent housing options are available, eligible Downtown Rising clients may be referred to general RRH units using the same one-to-one ratio.
- Downtown Rising Clients will be prioritized by VI-SPDAT score and Length of Time experiencing homelessness in alignment with the Coordinated Entry Prioritization Policy.

3. Designated Downtown Rising Units

- The Downtown Rising Initiative will include designated RRH units for Downtown Rising clients. These designated RRH units will be the first option for Downtown Rising clients who meet RRH prioritization criteria.
 - PSH-eligible clients may be placed in designated RRH or equivalent housing if PSH/OPH units are unavailable. These clients may be eligible for transfer to PSH in accordance with the CoC Transfer Policy.

4. Eligibility Documentation and Program Standards

- All clients, regardless of Downtown Rising participation, must meet program eligibility and documentation requirements for the Permanent Housing intervention to which they are referred.
- **Document Requirements:** Document requirements vary by project and may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - ID
 - Birth Certificate
 - Social Security Card
 - HUD McKinney (PSH/OPH)
- **HMIS Upload:** All required documents must be uploaded into HMIS prior to referral.

5. Data Tracking and Enrollment Requirements

- Clients must have an active Downtown Rising Street Outreach and Coordinated Entry enrollments in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to document program participation and determine eligibility.
- Housing eligibility and prioritization will be based on Coordinated Entry enrollment and VI-SPDAT data in HMIS.

Special Populations

Clients engaged through the Downtown Rising Initiative may also qualify under special population categories including **families, youth, and veterans**. The following apply:

1. Special Population RRH Projects

- Downtown Rising clients who qualify as part of a special population may be prioritized for Special Population RRH projects using a one-to-one ratio with the general Housing Queue, depending on housing availability and client need.
- Final determination will be made by the **CES Lead Agency, Partners for Home**, based on client eligibility, housing availability, and system needs.

2. Chronic Homeless Clients with VI-SPDAT <11

- Chronically homeless clients with a VI-SPDAT score below 11 may be prioritized for **special population-specific PSH/OPH** projects for which they are eligible, consistent with current CES prioritization practices.

Implementation and Oversight

Partners for Home, as the **CES Lead Agency**, is responsible for managing the implementation of this policy and ensuring accountability. Responsibilities include:

- **Client Identification & Referral**
Identify eligible Downtown Rising clients in HMIS using CES data and ensure timely, compliant referrals.
- **Training & Support**
Provide training and technical assistance to partners on eligibility, documentation, and VI-SPDAT use.
- **Referral & Ratio Management**
Monitor the one-to-one referral ratio for RRH, PSH, and OPH placements.
- **Transfer Oversight**
Track PSH-eligible clients placed in RRH and facilitate transfers per the **CoC Transfer Policy**.
- **Equity Oversight**
Conduct **annual equity audits** to assess system impact and ensure fairness in housing placements. This includes reviewing disaggregated data by race, gender, age, and special population categories.
- **Data & Reporting**
Ensure accurate HMIS documentation and produce reports on referrals, outcomes, and equity.

- **System Coordination**

Lead ongoing collaboration with CES partners to support consistent implementation and problem resolution.

- **Exception Review**

Handle policy exceptions or appeals in coordination with relevant CES stakeholders.