

Date: March 24, 2020

To: Rapid Re-housing Projects funding in Fiscal Year 2019-2020, and Fiscal Year 2020-2021

From: Chuck Mottern, Homeless Services Funding Coordinator

CC: Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Team Manager  
Michael Gause, Ending Homeless Team Manager

Re: Allowable Number of Months for Rental Assistance for Rapid Re-Housing and Homelessness Prevention Projects.

---

This memo provides the procedure to track the number of months that households in rapid re-housing and homeless prevention projects receive rental and utility assistance through Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Homelessness Prevention (HP) projects funded through the HOME Sonoma County funding process.

Per the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC) Program Standards and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) regulations, a participant/household may receive up to 24 months of rental assistance, payment of rental arrears, or a combination of both within a three-year period. Additionally, the participant/household may receive up to 24 months of utility assistance and utility arrears, or a combination of both within a three-year period. The three year period begins the first date that assistance is provided. Given the limited funds available for homeless services and the large number of persons experiencing homelessness, only in rare circumstances should any household receive a full 24 months of rental assistance and utility assistance within a three year period. That being said, SCCDC's intention for this guidance is to help providers determine eligibility for the maximum amount of assistance.

Effective immediately, the new procedure requires providers to take the following actions:

1. Upon exiting a participant, Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Homelessness Prevention (HP) providers will complete the Touchpoint "*Rapid Rehousing – Assistance Provided*" in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
2. Procedures for exiting a participant from an RRH/HP project are as follows:
  - a. When exiting a participant from an RRH or HP project, complete the "*Rapid Rehousing – Assistance provided*" touchpoint in HMIS.
    1. This touchpoint will collect the data for:

- i. The participant's start date in the program.
    - ii. The total number of months that the participant/household received rental assistance and rental arrears.
    - iii. The total number of months that the participant/household received utility assistance and utility arrears.
  - b. Complete the HUD Exit Assessment for the participant/household
- 3. Before providing financial assistance, verify through HMIS if a household has received RRH and HP support from another provider.
  - a. If another provider has assisted the household, determine the following:
    - i. The number of months of rental assistance or rental arrears provided
    - ii. The number of months of utility assistance or utility arrears provided
  - b. When calculating the total number of months of rental assistance and/or rental arrear payments made during the past three years, include all RRH and HP projects in HMIS that provided support to the participant/household.
  - c. When calculating the total number of months of utility assistance and/or utility arrear payments made during the past three years, include all RRH and HP projects that provided utility assistance to the participant/household.
- 4. To determine the required information, conduct the following process during the Initial Evaluation of a participant for the RRH or HP project:
  - a. Search for the participant/household in HMIS.
    - i. If the participant/household does not have any HUD Assessments for another RRH or HP program within the last three years, continue the initial evaluation of the participant to see if they are eligible for RRH/HP assistance.
    - ii. If the participant has been in another RRH or HP project within the last three years:
      - 1. View the 'Rapid Re-housing – Assistance provided' touchpoint to identify each RRH/HP project that shows the participant/household as enrolled during the last three years.

- a. Calculate the combined total number of months the participant received rental assistance from every touchpoint in HMIS.
- b. Calculate the combined total number of months the participant received utility assistance from every touchpoint in HMIS.
  - i. If the total number of months is less than 24, continue the initial evaluation to assess if the participant is eligible for RRH/HP assistance.
    - 1. Note – Households will only be eligible for the remaining number of months from the 24-month total. For example, if the participant previously received three months of rental arrear payments and three months of rental assistance (total of 6 months) within one year, then the participant would be eligible for up to 18 months of rental assistance within the next two years.
    - 2. If the same participant also received three months of utility assistance within one year, then the participant would be eligible for up to 21 months of utility assistance within the next two years.
  - ii. If the total number of months is more than 24, provide other resources and referrals to the participant.

Providers must follow this procedure beginning April 1, 2020. It will remain in effect until the SCCDC publishes further guidance. If you have questions, please contact Homeless Services Funding Coordinator Chuck Mottern at [chuck.mottern@sonoma-county.org](mailto:chuck.mottern@sonoma-county.org).