



**Ventura County Continuum of Care
Written Standards for HUD CoC and ESG
2017**

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The County of Ventura is the Collaborative Applicant (CA) for the Ventura County Continuum of Care. Staff support is provided to the Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance and Board by the County of Ventura County Executive Office. The standards contained within this document shall be applied to all projects funded within the Ventura County Continuum of Care. Standards that apply only to subrecipients of Ventura County will be differentiated by the term “Subrecipient”; all other standards will refer to “recipient.”

I. Introduction

Purpose for Standards

The purpose of the *Standards* is to:

- ✓ Provide detail on participant eligibility;
- ✓ Outline the allowable activities; and
- ✓ Provide standards for documenting eligibility.

For Subrecipients of Ventura County, this document is incorporated into the Specific Terms and Conditions (Exhibit A) of the signed agreement (hereinafter Contract) between the County and its Subrecipient. Local policies and procedures are subject to change at any time.

Overview of the HEARTH Act

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) was signed into law on May 20, 2009. The HEARTH Act reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, but with some important changes, including:

- The consolidation of HUD's competitive grant programs, the Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care Program (SPC) and the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program;
- The revision of the Emergency Shelter Grants Program and renaming it as the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program;
- The creation of a Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program;
- A change in HUD's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness;
- A simplified match requirement;
- An increase in prevention resources; and,
- An increased emphasis on performance.

The HEARTH Act implementation is occurring in stages, including the publication of the following regulations:

- ❖ [Definition of Homeless \(Final Rule\) Docket No. FR-5333-F-02](#)
This final rule was published on December 5, 2011 and provided the definition of "homeless", "disability", and "developmental disability". Additionally, the rule established clear recordkeeping requirements for verifying eligibility to receive assistance.
- ❖ [Defining "Chronically Homeless" \(Final Rule\) Docket No. FR-5809-F-01](#)
This final rule was effective on January 4, 2016, and HUD expected compliance with this definition for all new admissions as of January 16, 2016. The final rule changed the definition that was in effect in the CoC Program interim rule: key changes included requiring an individual or head of household to have been living in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years *where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months*; replacing the term "disabling condition" with "homeless individual with a disability"; and defining an occasion by a break of at least seven nights not residing in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or a place not meant for human habitation. The final rule also established recordkeeping requirements for documenting chronic homelessness.

❖ [Emergency Solutions Grant \(Interim Rule\) 24 CFR § 576](#)

The interim rule revises the Emergency Shelter Grants Program and renames it the Emergency Solutions Grants Program to broaden existing emergency shelter and homelessness prevention activities and to add short- and medium-term rental assistance and support services to rapidly rehouse homeless people. There is now a greater emphasis on helping people quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. The key changes that reflect this new emphasis are the expansion of the homeless prevention component and the addition of the rapid rehousing assistance component.

❖ [Conforming Amendments to the Consolidated Plan \(Interim Rule\) 24 CFR § 91](#)

This interim rule updated the annual action plan requirements, revising the homeless needs narrative to describe the local one-year goals and specific action steps for reducing and ending homelessness. In addition, the ESG narrative section was revised to include new requirements such as written standards for the provision of ESG assistance, performance standards for evaluating ESG activities, and a homeless outreach and consultation strategy.

The annual report requirements were updated to include an evaluation of the jurisdiction's progress in meeting its specific objectives in reducing and ending homelessness. The ESG narrative section was also revised to include additional reporting information on ESG, including the evaluation of the outcomes for ESG activities measured under the new performance standards developed.

❖ [Homeless Management Information System](#)

The HEARTH Act requires that CoC and ESG funded projects participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The HMIS component varies between the CoC and ESG Program regulations. County policy is to share HMIS funds with Subrecipients.

❖ [Continuum of Care \(Interim Rule\) 24 CFR § 578](#)

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Interim Rule was published on July 31, 2012 and took effect on August 30, 2012. The purpose of the regulation is to:

- ✓ Codify the CoC Planning Process;
- ✓ Return individuals and families who experience homelessness to permanent housing in less than 30 days;
- ✓ Consolidate the Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care Program (SPC) and the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program;
- ✓ Promote a community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- ✓ Provide funding to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing trauma and dislocation;
- ✓ Promote access to mainstream benefits;
- ✓ Optimize self-sufficiency;
- ✓ Provide funding to support the CoC structure & process; and
- ✓ Codify the CoC structure & process.

❖ [Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program \(Proposed Rule\)](#)

The overall goal of the HEARTH Act is to reduce and ultimately end homelessness by reducing the duration of time people spend homeless and reducing recidivism back into homelessness. Currently, Ventura County has funding through the Emergency Solutions Grants Program and the Continuum of Care Program to undertake projects that work toward this goal.

II. Program Overviews

a. Emergency Solutions Grants Program

The Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program is designed to respond to crisis and provide emergency assistance to prevent homelessness and enable homeless households to move toward independent living. ESG funds are authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and are intended to help improve the quality of existing emergency shelters for the homeless, make additional shelters available, meet the costs of operating these facilities, rapidly rehouse homeless individuals and families, provide essential services to them, and to prevent homelessness. ESG projects will be required to assist people in moving to permanent housing and reduce the time spent in shelters and on the streets.

Recent changes to ESG funding have further defined the purpose and expanded the breadth of activities and going forward, the funds will be used for a variety of assistance, including: *Emergency Shelter, short- or medium-term Rental Assistance, Housing Search and Placement, and Housing Stability Case Management*. The Homelessness Prevention component includes various housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and medium-term rental assistance. The Rapid Rehousing component includes similar services and assistance to help people who are homeless move quickly into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. The funds under this program are intended to target households who would be unsheltered but for this assistance. The County of Ventura and the City of Oxnard are recipients of HUD ESG Program funds and will administer this award for eligible agencies referred to as Subrecipients. The County of Ventura acts as the administrative entity for State of California ESG funds. All funded agencies are required to follow federal guidelines in the implementation of ESG funding.

Policy on Project Selection

The County will notify community members and key stakeholders that ESG funding is available and will publish applications on the Ventura County CoC (www.venturacoc.org) website with a deadline for project applications to be submitted to the County. The CoC Data Performance & Evaluation Committee scores projects locally and recommends projects for funding. The CoC Data recommendations are taken to the CoC Board for final recommendations and approved by the local entity administering this funding (County Board of Supervisors or City of Oxnard).

b. Continuum of Care Program

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program consists of projects that provide housing and supportive services to formerly homeless individuals and families. The goal of projects funded under the CoC Program is to assist households with attaining and sustaining permanent housing as quickly as possible. In Ventura County, CoC Program funds are currently used to support various projects, including Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing. In addition to these allowable project components, the interim rule also allows funding to be used to provide, to a limited degree, Prevention.

Ventura County is the Collaborative Applicant for the VCCoC. The County, along with non-profit entities, are directly awarded projects under the CoC Program. The County also passes funds on to subrecipients to carry out activities under the CoC Program.

Policy on Project Selection

Annually, HUD publishes a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the CoC Program competition. The County will notify community members and key stakeholders that the application is available and will publish all parts of the CoC Consolidated Application on the Ventura County CoC (www.venturacoc.org) website with a deadline for project applications to be submitted to the County. During this competitive process, the CoC develops objective scoring criteria based on the criteria from the NOFA and local priorities that are consistent with the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The CoC Data Performance & Evaluation Committee scores projects locally and recommends projects for inclusion in the application submitted to HUD. The CoC Board receives committee recommendations and makes final approval. The County shall notify project applicants in a timely manner, per the NOFA guidelines, whether the project application(s) will be included in the CoC Consolidated Application submission. If a project is not recommended for funding, the County will notify the project applicant, in writing, of this decision.

These guidelines will be updated as necessary throughout the grant period and will continue to expand and include a variety of project components. The County reserves the right to revise the guideline as deemed necessary and will to the extent practicable or as required by HUD, consult with the Ventura County Continuum of Care, ESG subrecipients, CoC recipients/subrecipients, homeless or formerly homeless or other interested parties.

III. Coordination Among Providers

The County and the Continuum of Care have been engaged in planning activities to:

- ✓ Increase systems coordination among the various housing and service providers;
- ✓ Improve access for participants;
- ✓ Better target funding; and
- ✓ Better address the housing and service needs in our community.

The County, CoC and ESG (Sub)/Recipients will coordinate and integrate, to the maximum extent practicable, CoC- and ESG-funded activities as well as other homeless programs within the area covered by the Ventura County CoC with other mainstream housing, health, social services, employment, education, and youth programs, including those identified in 24 CFR § 576.400(b) and (c).

a. Coordinated Entry and Assessment System

The Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry System, Pathways to Home, has been developed in accordance with the HUD Continuum of Care Regulations. Participation in this system is mandatory for ESG and CoC (Sub)/Recipients. See the Ventura County Continuum of Care: Coordinated Entry Process and Policies, incorporated herein by reference.

The CoC uses the coordinated entry process to prioritize homeless persons within the CoC's geographic area. Prioritization is based on a specific and definable set of criteria that are documented, made publicly available and applied consistently throughout the CoC for all populations. The CoC prioritization policies and procedures are consistent with CoC and ESG written standards under 24 CFR 578(a) (9) and 24 CFR 576.4. The following criteria establish how homeless individuals/families will be prioritized for shelter and housing programs in the CoC. The VI-SPDAT will be used by the Coordinated Entry Assessment Sites to assess individuals experiencing homelessness. The first three serve as the primary methods of ranking individuals and the remaining two prioritizations serve as tie breakers if the first three prioritization methods result in tied rankings:

- 1. Chronic Homeless Status:** This first prioritization criteria focuses on those individuals with a disability who have experienced long-term or multiple episodes of homelessness and are generally those with the highest need and vulnerability. In addition, this population has been identified as being the largest user of homeless system resources. This will be determined by the documented length of time of homelessness (episodic or continuous) and the reported service needs of individuals including chronic health, mental health, substance use or other service needs that impact vulnerability. Persons with the document longest length of time homeless and documented highest service needs will receive first priority.
- 2. VI-SPDAT Score:** This second prioritization factor targets the most vulnerable clients in the homeless system as determined by their total VI-SPDAT score. VI-SPDAT score will be utilized in determining the ranking on the prioritization list in combination with the factors in the section above.
- 3. Length of Time Homeless:** The third prioritization factor is the length of time an individual has experienced homelessness, giving priority to the person that has experienced homelessness the longest.

- 4. Service Level Needs:** The fourth prioritization factor targets individuals with medical needs who will be prioritized when they have behavioral health conditions or histories of substance use which may either mask or exacerbate medical conditions.
- 5. Date of VI-SPDAT Assessment:** The final prioritization criteria will be the date of the individual’s assessment, giving priority to the earliest date of assessment.

Prioritizing chronically homeless persons in CoC program-funded Permanent Supportive Housing beds dedicated or prioritized by persons experiencing chronic homelessness:

- 1 (a) First Priority–Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability experiencing chronic homelessness that is based on the length of time in which an individual or family has resided in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter and the severity of the individual or families’ service needs.
- (b) If there is not a person that meets specific program eligibility criteria of a target population (i.e.: mental illness), the agency would then accept the next prioritized person on the list. This means, if the CoC has served everyone with self-reported target disability (i.e. mental illness), the agency may be referred another person that meets the chronic homeless status (i.e. with a different disability).

Prioritizing when there are no chronically homeless individuals and families within the VCCoC’s geographic area:

- 1. First Priority-Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability with long-term or multiple episodes of homelessness (may not meet chronic homelessness definition) and Severe Service Needs.
- 2. Second Priority–Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability with Severe Service Needs.
- 3. Third Priority—Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability Coming from Places Not Meant for Human Habitation, Safe Haven, or Emergency Shelter Without Severe Service Needs
- 4. Fourth Priority–Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability Coming from Transitional Housing

Unsheltered persons receive first priority for emergency shelter and rapid re-housing. In order to expedite referrals in placing individuals with emergent needs, a direct referral for Transitional Housing can occur if there are three or more vacancies, with a case update at the next case conference meeting.

b. Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

i. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Recipients shall market housing and supportive services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, or handicap; and, shall provide program applicants and participants with information, in writing, on their rights and remedies under applicable federal, state, and local fair housing and civil rights laws. 24 CFR § 578.93(c). Subrecipients shall submit these written materials to the County as an attachment to the Subrecipient’s Management Plan, as required by the Statement of Work (Exhibit B) of the Contract, effective FY2013. The County shall review these documents for potential violations of fair housing laws and shall assist Subrecipients in coming into compliance with this requirement. If the County encounters a condition or action that

impedes fair housing choice, the County shall work with the applicable jurisdiction(s) that provided the Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan to address and remedy the violation(s). 24 CFR § 578.93(c)(2).

ii. Integration and Accessibility

Housing and supportive services must be offered in an integrated manner, such that persons with disabilities may enjoy a meaningful life within the community. See *Olmstead v. L.C.* (527 U.S. 581 (1999) 138 F.3d 893). Recipients shall offer housing and supportive services to enable individuals with disabilities to interact with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible. 24 CFR § 578.93(d). Reasonable accommodations and modifications must be offered when appropriate. See *Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications* below.

iii. Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications for Persons with Disabilities

Recipients are required to provide reasonable accommodations and modifications for persons with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is defined as changing the rules, policies, or services so that a person with a disability has equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling unit or common space. Permitting a person with a disability to have a service animal is an example of a reasonable accommodation. A reasonable modification is defined as modifying a structure so that a person with a disability has the full enjoyment of the housing and related facilities. Installing a grab bar in the bathroom of a person with a disability is an example of a reasonable modification. For federally-funded housing, the recipient bears the burden of paying for the modification. Recipients must inform applicants during the intake process of their right to request a reasonable accommodation or modification.

iv. Discrimination Based on Household Composition

A recipient receiving funds under the ESG or CoC Programs cannot discriminate against a group of persons presenting as a family based on the composition of the family, the age of any members of the family, the disability status of any members of the family, marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity. However, housing *may* be limited to families with children who are under the age of 18.

Refer to the Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, “Equal Access Rule,” (77 FR 5662) and HUD’s Frequently Asked Question regarding the definition of “family,”

<https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/1529/how-is-the-definition-of-family-that-was-included>.

v. Preventing Involuntary Family Separation

In an effort to maintain family unity, for housing serving families with children, the age and gender of a child under age 18 shall not be used as a basis for denying any family’s admission. 24 CFR § 578.93(e). Additionally, recipients may not deny admission to any member of the family (e.g., 15-year old son). If a family is involuntarily separated for any reason, a report must be sent to the Ventura County Continuum of Care staff. Please contact Tara Carruth at 805-654-3838 or tara.carruth@ventura.org

vi. Guidance for Placement for Transgender Persons in Single-Sex Emergency Shelters and Other Facilities

Recipients operating ESG-single-sex emergency shelters (or other ESG- and/or CoC facilities) must follow HUD's guidance regarding placement for transgender persons, [HUD Notice CPD-15-02](#), and the Equal Access Rule.

A recipient that makes decisions about eligibility for or placement into single-sex emergency shelters (or other facilities) must place an applicant or participant in a shelter (or facility) that corresponds to the gender with which the person identifies, taking health and safety concerns into consideration. This placement should not be based on complaints of another person when the sole stated basis of the complaint is an applicant's or participant's non-conformance with gender stereotypes. A recipient must not ask an applicant or participant to provide anatomical information or documentation, physical or medical evidence of the person's gender identity. The recipient must take reasonable steps to address safety and privacy concerns; the recipient should provide for privacy in bathrooms and dressing areas. For instance, recipients may install privacy curtains or partitions.

vii. Prioritized Subpopulations and Fair Housing Implications

Recipients shall comply with applicable civil rights laws, including the Fair Housing Act. Within this framework, these standards establish subpopulations to be prioritized for housing and services that align with the identified needs of the local community and the goals of the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. Subpopulations may be prioritized as long as doing so does not discriminate against any protected class under federal nondiscrimination laws in 24 CFR § 5.105; subpopulations may also be prioritized according to who needs the specialized supportive services that are offered by the project. 24 CFR § 578.93(b)(2) and (7).

1. *Dedicated versus Prioritized*

Projects and/or beds that are *dedicated* to serving a specific subpopulation must continue serving only this subpopulation. (For instance, a Permanent Supportive Housing project that is dedicated to serving chronically homeless individuals must continue serving only chronically homeless individuals). Projects and/or beds that are not currently dedicated to serving a specific subpopulation must give the designated subpopulations priority for admission, in the order established by these standards, when a bed becomes available through turnover. This means that if two otherwise eligible individuals are seeking admission into the program, one who falls within the designated prioritized subpopulation and one who does not, the individual who is in the designated prioritized subpopulation must be given priority for admission. **For both dedicated and prioritized beds, if there are no persons on a waiting list or applying for entrance to the program who fall within the dedicated or first priority subpopulation, recipients should not hold the unit vacant, but instead should serve the next prioritized subpopulation who may benefit from the services being provided.**

2. *Fair Housing Implications*

The Local Standards establish priority subpopulations by project type (i.e. Permanent Supportive Housing); recipients may not set more restrictive priorities unless a federal statute or executive order specifically authorizes this limitation, or unless expressly authorized by 24 CFR § 578.93(b)(1) to (7). For instance, while a Permanent Supportive

Housing project may prioritize chronically homeless persons with a qualifying disability per the Local Standards, beds may not be reserved to persons with a *specific* disability (i.e. physical disability). If an individual who is otherwise qualified but who does not have a *physical* disability seeks admission and would benefit from the services offered, this person may not be excluded from the project. Alternatively, for example, recipients may reserve beds for persons with HIV/AIDS if the housing also receives funding from the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program (HOPWA).

c. Marketing and Outreach

The Continuum of Care has developed marketing strategies for the purpose of fair and equal access to services. Outreach includes information flyers available at services sites and public locations, direct outreach to people on the street, announcements at public meetings, quarterly educational training to service providers, updated CoC website with resource materials, and a contract with 2-1-1 to assist with the coordinated entry process and refer people to the appropriate services. The coordinated entry process is linked to street outreach efforts to prioritize people in the same manner as any other person seeking services through other means.

IV. Policies & Procedures

In order to best meet the needs of the community and in accordance with 24 CFR § 576 and 24 CFR § 578, the following policies and procedures have been established to ensure consistent practices in regard to admission, service requirements, duration of assistance, and exiting for all homeless housing projects within the Ventura County Continuum of Care. All projects must incorporate the Coordinated Entry prioritization standards for the project type. Refer to the Coordinated Entry Assessment Policies and Procedures, which are incorporated by reference.

a. Emergency Shelter / Safe Haven

The overarching goal of shelter projects is to reduce the time spent homeless. Emergency Shelter funds are intended to respond to crisis and provide short-term emergency assistance to enable homeless households to move toward independent living by obtaining permanent housing as quickly as possible. Safe Havens serve a hard-to-reach homeless population with severe mental illness with the goal of permanent housing placement.

i. Admission

To the extent practicable, recipients will prioritize individuals and families who are currently living in Ventura County who have an identified prior residence as living in places not designed for, or not ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation including a car, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, an airport, or a campground. Recipients that are defined as Victim Service Providers will exclusively serve individuals and families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. *See Section IV, [Victim Service Providers](#), and [Table 6.2](#), Category 4, for additional details.* If an unaccompanied minor youth enters an emergency shelter, the shelter provider must notify Children & Family Services within 24 hours and follow the Ventura County Youth Emergency Shelter guidelines. All participants served in Emergency Shelter must meet the appropriate eligibility requirements as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#). Safe Haven projects serve literally homeless persons with severe and persistent mental illness, as defined by the CoC Program interim rule.

ii. Service Requirement

Each participant will be assessed to identify needs and barriers to obtain housing and increase self-sufficiency. An initial evaluation and assessment must be completed in HMIS at program entry, including verifying and documenting eligibility. If a participant's stay in Emergency Shelter is longer than 30 days, then the recipient must reassess and document the need for continued services every 30 days while the participant continues in shelter. The reassessment must show that the participant needs additional time in shelter to obtain other housing, and would be unsheltered without ESG assistance. Safe Haven projects must provide 24-hour residence for eligible persons for an unspecified period, have an overnight capacity limited to 25 or fewer persons, and provide low-demand services and referrals for the residents.

Obtaining appropriate housing, particularly permanent housing, and addressing the most immediate and manageable barriers is the priority for emergency shelters and safe havens. Given the expected short-period of assistance in emergency shelters, the focus is on those barriers that can be addressed during the timeframe of assistance. Each participant in both emergency shelters and safe haven projects will have a housing stability/service plan

that may include longer-term solutions to other barriers or risk-factors that might destabilize a household after assistance has ended. See Section XIV, [Recordkeeping Requirements](#). This plan is to be completed at program entry and updated at least every 30 days for Emergency Shelter. The plan will be derived from the assessment and include at a minimum, housing stability goals and other goals as appropriate to the essential services identified in the Subrecipient's Application and Statement of Work (Exhibit B) of the Contract. Each participant will participate in developing her/his own individualized housing stability/service plan to obtain housing and maintain housing stability after funded assistance ends.

Recipients may use their current evaluation and assessment form, reassessment form, tracking method, and housing stability/service plan, or develop new forms or other tracking methods. The evaluation, assessment, reassessment, housing stability/service plan, and goals must be documented according to the recipient's protocols for documentation, and at a minimum must be in a format that is readily available for monitoring. Essential services must be tied directly to the needs and barriers identified in the assessment and recipients are encouraged to build on the participants' strengths to attain housing stability and increase self-sufficiency.

iii. [Lease Requirement](#)

Participants must *not* be required to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. For additional information, refer to Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#).

iv. [Duration of Assistance](#)

Emergency Shelters must operate a maximum 90-day project model. To the extent practicable, participants will be assisted in obtaining housing within 30 days of entry into the emergency shelter. All shelters will strive to reduce the average length of stay. However, participants may stay longer in order to prevent them from becoming homeless, on the streets, or other places not meant for human habitation. Safe Haven projects must provide 24-hour residence for eligible persons for an unspecified period and strive for permanent housing placement.

The County works with the Continuum of Care community stakeholders to develop policies for the maximum allowable length of stay in emergency shelters as well as to identify benchmarks to enhance efficient utilization of the homeless services system. These policies and benchmarks will be updated during the applicable funding rounds. Updates will be communicated through revisions to these Local Standards and in Subrecipient contracts.

v. [Exiting](#)

To the degree practicable, participants exiting emergency shelter and safe havens will be assisted in accessing housing that best fits their needs, with a preference for assisting participants to access permanent housing. Exits may also include participants entering treatment facilities to address mental health, substance abuse, or medical needs; recipients will coordinate with the treatment provider to support a successful transition. When possible, housing options or other resources should be provided at exit, so that participants have knowledge of where to go when treatment is completed.

vi. [Performance Measures](#)

Emergency Shelter and Safe Haven programs will be evaluated on HUD's System

Performance Measures and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure they are operating efficiently. The CoC staff will lead the evaluation efforts, with guidance from the CoC Data Committee.

System Performance Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless

System performance measure one evaluates length of time homeless, measuring the average and median length of time people spend in homeless situations (including Emergency Shelters / Safe Havens). This measure focuses on whether that time period is getting shorter, staying the same, or getting longer.

System Performance Measure 7: Successful Placement in Permanent Housing

System performance measure seven focuses on how successful emergency shelter projects are at helping people move off the “street” and towards permanent housing. This is important because people living on the street and in places not meant for human habitation are at an increased risk of death. This measure calculates the percent of Emergency Shelter and Safe Haven clients who have exited to a permanent housing destination as recorded in HMIS during the report period. The measure is looking for an increase in the percentage of people who exit to permanent housing destinations from an emergency shelter or safe haven project during the reporting period.

b. Transitional Housing

The policies and procedures in this Section b apply only to Transitional Housing that is filled through Pathways to Home.

i. Admission

To the extent practicable, recipients will prioritize individuals and families who are currently living in Ventura County; cannot be more appropriately served by another program or system of care; have an identified prior residence as living in places not designed for, or not ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation including a car, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, an airport, or a campground; lack a support network and have no other options or resources for housing. Transitional Housing is reserved for persons with high barriers who require longer-term interventions. All participants served in Transitional Housing must meet the appropriate eligibility requirements as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#).

ii. Service Requirement

For Transitional Housing projects, supportive services must be made available to participants throughout the duration of their residence in the project. Services must be necessary to assist participants to obtain and maintain permanent housing. Each participant must have an individual support plan in place, derived from recipients’ ongoing, at least annual, assessment of participant needs and services must be adjusted accordingly. See *Section XIV, [Recordkeeping Requirements](#)*.

iii. Lease Requirement

Participants must sign a lease or occupancy agreement that is for a term of at least one (1) month but no more than twenty-four (24) months and cannot be extended. For additional

information, refer to Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#).

iv. [Duration of Assistance](#)

Transitional Housing facilitates the movement of homeless households to permanent housing within 24 months of entry. Efforts should be made to move persons to permanent housing within 6 months of entering transitional housing. Services may also be provided to former residents of Transitional Housing for no more than 6 months after leaving Transitional Housing to assist their adjustment to independent living.

v. [Exiting](#)

The sole purpose of Transitional Housing is to assist participants to obtain permanent housing. Except in extenuating circumstances, participants will exit transitional housing to permanent housing within 24 months.

c. [Homelessness Prevention \(ESG Only\)](#)

Homelessness Prevention is intended to prevent households from moving into emergency shelter or other homeless situations.

i. [Admission](#)

Prevention assistance will be prioritized for individuals and families who are currently living in Ventura County, cannot be more appropriately served by another program or system of care, lack a support network and have no other options or resources for housing. Prevention projects must collect documentation that participants would become homeless for this assistance. All participants served under Prevention must meet the appropriate eligibility requirements as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#).

ii. [Service Requirement](#)

Prevention projects must require the participant to develop a plan on how they will retain permanent housing after assistance ends and to meet with a case manager not less than once per month* to assist the participant in maintaining long-term housing stability as set forth in 24 CFR § 576.401 (e)(1)(i). *See Section XIV, [Recordkeeping Requirements](#).*

***Exception:** Recipients that also receive funding under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) or the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVSP) are exempt from the requirement to meet with participants monthly because these programs prohibit making housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services. *See § 576.401(e)(2). See also [Victim Service Providers](#).*

Re-evaluation of eligibility is required for Prevention; re-evaluation must occur at least every three (3) months. Re-evaluations must be documented in each participant's file and demonstrate that the participant lacks sufficient resources and support networks necessary to retain housing without assistance. Re-evaluations must also demonstrate that the household's annual income is less than or equal to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Projects must follow evaluation and participant eligibility rules and regulations as set forth in 24 CFR § 576.401(a) through (e).

All supportive services will be provided as necessary to help participants maintain permanent housing, or move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Supportive services are limited with ESG funds and may be used

only to provide housing relocation and stabilization services. Prevention assistance must be provided in accordance with the housing relocation and stabilization services requirements in 24 CFR § 576.104 and 576.105, the short- and medium-term rental assistance requirements in 24 CFR § 576.106, and the written standards and procedures established under 24 CFR § 576.400.

Rent Subsidy Models

Prevention funds are used to assist participants to remain in permanent housing and regain stability. Or, where the current housing does not meet the participant's needs, the participant may move to more suitable housing. Funds may be used to provide short-term (up to 3 months) or medium-term (4 to 24 months) rental assistance over a 3-year period. Funding requirements may be further limited or defined by the Ventura County Continuum of Care in NOFA's or RFP's but at a minimum, all participants served in Prevention projects must have an identified rent subsidy model prior to receiving assistance or moving into a unit and this must be consistent throughout their term of service. The steps must be known (and documented) in advance and act as deadlines for increasing income. Whether the rent subsidy is based on participants' income or a fixed rate, the subsidy declines in "steps" until the participants assume full responsibility for monthly housing costs either by:

- Using a fixed timeline; or
- When the participant has reached specific goals

Rent assistance will be graduated, so the participants' share of rent will increase until they pay full rent. Should participants experience a situation that prevents them from achieving the graduated subsidy goal, then the subsidy may be extended or adjusted with a revised graduated subsidy established. Participants must be in compliance with the program and working on their housing stability plan to be considered for an extension or revised graduated subsidy plan.

Participants may receive up to two subsequent financial assistance payments after their graduated subsidy has ended if they were compliant with their housing stability plan and they experienced a hardship that prevented them from making their payment. Hardships may include a job loss or reduction in pay/hours, medical expenses, or other similar situation. The participant must not have exited the program to receive assistance. However, at no time may the rental assistance exceed 24 months in any three (3) year period.

iii. [Lease Requirement](#)

For ESG-Homelessness Prevention, participants must sign a legally binding, written lease agreement; however, there are no requirements regarding a minimum term or other standards. For additional information, refer to Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#).

iv. [Duration of Assistance](#)

For participants seeking permanent housing, housing stability case management may not exceed 30 days. Once permanent housing is obtained, rental assistance may not exceed 24 months during any three (3) year period, although the assistance may be further limited or defined by the Ventura County Continuum of Care. A graduated subsidy model must be identified and applied to all participants as outlined above in Section c.ii, [Service Requirement](#).

v. **Exiting**

Prior to the assistance ending, a plan must be in place that identifies how the participant will maintain stability in permanent housing. If the participant is not yet able to retain permanent housing, they will be re-assessed. Participants may receive additional assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless, on the streets, or other places not meant for human habitation. However, participants may not receive more than 24 months of rental assistance in any three (3) year period.

vi. **Performance Measures**

Homeless Prevention programs will be evaluated on HUD's System Performance Measures and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure they are operating efficiently. The CoC staff will lead the evaluation efforts, with guidance from the CoC Data Committee.

System Performance Measure 5: Number of Persons who Become Homeless for the First Time

System performance measure five evaluates the number of persons who become homeless for the first time during the reporting period. This measure focuses on whether that number is getting larger, staying the same, or getting smaller. The goal of this measure is to reduce every year the number of people who become homeless for the first time.

d. **Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid Rehousing is a type of permanent housing that offers supportive services, as needed, and/or short-term (up to three (3) months) or medium-term (three (3) to 24 months) rental assistance in order to help homeless individuals or families move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability. 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(1)(ii). Participants may locate housing of their choice in the private rental market within Ventura County.

Rapid Rehousing projects must comply with the [Office of Community and Homeless Services \(OCHS\) Rapid Rehousing Guide](#), which is incorporated herein by reference.

i. **Admission**

Rapid Rehousing assistance will be prioritized for individuals and families who are currently living in Ventura County, cannot be more appropriately served by another program or system of care, lack a support network and have no other options or resources for housing. Persons who have been homeless previously, have received Prevention assistance in the past, or have a history of chronic homelessness will be prioritized. Rapid Rehousing projects must collect documentation that participants would become homeless but for this assistance. In addition to the general priority established above, Rapid Rehousing assistance will be prioritized for individuals and families with the highest vulnerability score based on a Coordinated Entry Prioritization Assessment. Homeless veteran households will be further prioritized. All participants served under Rapid Rehousing must meet the appropriate eligibility requirements as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#), and as further described in the [Rapid Rehousing Guide](#).

ii. **Service Requirement**

Refer to the Rapid Rehousing Guide.

iii. **Lease Requirement**

Refer to the [Rapid Rehousing Guide](#). For CoC-Rapid Rehousing, participants must sign a lease that is for an initial term of one (1) year, that is terminable only for cause, and that automatically renews upon expiration (goes month-to-month). For ESG-Rapid Rehousing, participants must sign a legally binding, written lease agreement; however, there are no requirements regarding a minimum term or other standards. For additional information, refer to Section XIII [Housing Requirements](#).

iv. **Duration of Assistance**

Refer to the [Rapid Rehousing Guide](#).

v. **Exiting**

Refer to the [Rapid Rehousing Guide](#).

vi. **Performance Measures**

Rapid Rehousing programs will be evaluated on HUD's System Performance Measures and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure they are operating efficiently. The CoC staff will lead the evaluation efforts, with guidance from the CoC Data Committee.

System Performance Measure 7: Successful placements to permanent housing destinations.

System performance measure seven focuses on how successful Rapid Rehousing projects are at helping people exit to permanent housing. This measure is looking for an increase in the percentage of people who exit to positive destinations from a Rapid Rehousing project during the reporting period.

e. **Permanent Supportive Housing (CoC only)**

Permanent Supportive Housing provides assistance to individuals with disabilities and families in which one adult or child has a disability. The policies and procedures in this Section e apply to all Permanent Supportive Housing within the Ventura County Continuum of Care.

i. **Admission**

Permanent Supportive Housing will be prioritized for families and individuals currently residing in Ventura County; who are and have been living in places not designed for, or not ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation including a car, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, an airport, or a campground; who cannot be more appropriately served by another program or system of care and have no other options or resources for housing; and, who meet the criteria of chronic homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing projects will also be prioritized for individuals and families with the highest vulnerability score based on VI-SPDAT score. All participants served in Permanent Supportive Housing must meet the appropriate eligibility requirements as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#).

In addition to the general priority established above, Permanent Supportive Housing projects will utilize the following order of priority based on HUD Notice:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/notice-cpd-16-11-prioritizing-persons-experiencing-chronic-homelessness-and-other-vulnerable-homeless-persons-in-psh.pdf>

Severe Service Needs

The most severe service needs, which should be identified and verified through data-driven methods, means that at least one (1) of the following is true:

- History of high utilization of crisis services, which include but are not limited to, emergency rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities; or
- Significant health or behavioral health challenges or functional impairments which require a significant level of support in order to maintain permanent housing.

The determination must not be based on a specific diagnosis or disability type, but only on the severity of needs of the individual. Refer to the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements in 24 CFR 5.105 (a).

If no chronically homeless individuals or families are on the waiting list or applying for entrance to the program, Permanent Supportive Housing projects will prioritize homeless persons with disabilities who have been residing on the streets or in emergency shelter on less than four (4) separate occasions in the last three (3) years, but where the cumulative total length of the occasions equals at least 12 months. If no such individuals or families are on the waiting list or applying for entrance to the program, Permanent Supportive Housing projects will then utilize the following order of priority:

1. *Homeless persons with a disability and the most severe service needs.*
Persons in a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter, with the most severe service needs as defined in the paragraph above.
2. *Homeless persons with a disability with a long period of continuous or episodic homelessness.*
Persons in a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter continuously for at least six (6) months or on at least three (3) separate occasions in the last three (3) years where the cumulative total is at least six (6) months.
3. *Homeless persons with a disability coming from places not meant for human habitation, safe havens, or emergency shelters.*
4. *Homeless persons with a disability coming from transitional housing.*
Persons that entered transitional housing directly from a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter.

ii. [Service Requirement](#)

Permanent Supportive Housing projects must offer voluntary supportive services for the participants that enable them to live as independently as is practicable throughout the duration of their residence in the project. Each participant must have an individual support plan in place, derived from recipients' ongoing, at least annual, assessment of participants' needs and services must be adjusted accordingly. See [Section XIV, Recordkeeping Requirements](#). Services must be necessary to assist participants obtain and maintain housing.

iii. **Lease Requirement**

Participants must sign a lease that is for an initial term of one (1) year, that is terminable only for cause, and that automatically renews upon expiration (goes month-to-month). For additional information, refer to Section XIII [Housing Requirements](#).

iv. **Duration of Assistance**

There is no designated length of stay for participants of this type of housing.

Participants receiving rental assistance are permitted to be out of their unit for the purpose of brief institutional stays (jail, hospital, treatment) for a period not to exceed 90 days per occurrence.

v. **Exiting**

Permanent Supportive Housing is intended to be available to participants for as long as it provides housing assistance that meets their needs. Successful exits from Permanent Supportive Housing include:

- Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
- Exiting to another permanent supportive housing program
- Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Rental by client, other (non-VASH) ongoing housing subsidy
- Staying or living with family or friends, for a permanent tenure
- Exiting with a VASH subsidy

vi. **Performance Measures**

Permanent Supportive Housing programs will be evaluated on HUD’s System Performance Measures and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure they are operating efficiently. The CoC staff will lead the evaluation efforts, with guidance from the CoC Data Committee.

System Performance Measure 2: The extent to which persons who exit homelessness from permanent housing destination return to homelessness

System performance measure two evaluates recidivism, measuring the percent of returns to homelessness in people who exited to permanent housing. Specifically, this measure looks at returns over three time periods as well as the overall number of returns over two years:

- Number returning to homelessness in less than 6 months
- Number returning to homelessness from 6 to 12 months
- Number returning to homelessness from 13 to 24 months
- Total number of returns to homelessness over 2 years

System Performance Measure 4: Employment and income growth for homeless persons

System performance measure four focuses on the increase in the percent of adults who gain or increase employment or non-employment cash income over time.

System Performance Measure 7: Successful placement in or retention of permanent housing

System performance measure seven focuses on how successful Permanent Supportive Housing projects are at helping people exit to or remain in permanent housing. This measure is looking for an increase in the percentage of people who remain in a Permanent Supportive Housing project during the reporting period.

f. Street Outreach

Street Outreach is intended to serve unsheltered homeless individuals and families with a focus on achieving placement into permanent housing. The policies and procedures in this Section f apply to all Street Outreach within the Ventura County Continuum of Care.

i. Service Requirement

Street Outreach program staff engage unsheltered homeless individuals and families for the purpose of providing immediate support, intervention, and connections with homeless assistance programs, mainstream social services and housing programs. The staff will utilize the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) to determine the level of need and assist with referrals to services.

Essential services must be tied directly to the needs and barriers identified in the VI-SPDAT assessment by addressing urgent physical needs. Case management includes assessing housing and service needs, arranging, coordinating and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant.

Services for special populations include services for homeless youth, victim services, services for people living with HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ populations, persons with mental illness, and disabled persons, so long as the costs of providing these services are one of the eligible Street Outreach activities. The term victim services means services that assist program participants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including services offered by rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters.

ii. Duration of Assistance

Street Outreach must be provided to homeless individuals and families for at least the period during which grant funds are provided. Each subrecipient has been given a project goal to serve a certain number of beneficiaries within the contract year.

iii. Exiting

To the degree practicable, participants exiting Street Outreach will be assisted in accessing housing that best fits their needs, with a preference for assisting participants to access permanent housing. Exits may also include participants entering treatment facilities to address mental health, substance abuse, or medical needs; recipients will coordinate with the treatment provider to support a successful transition. When possible, housing options or other resources should be provided at exit, so that participants have knowledge of where to go when treatment is completed.

iv. Performance Measures

Street Outreach programs will be evaluated on HUD's System Performance Measures and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure they are operating efficiently. The CoC staff will lead the evaluation efforts, with guidance from the CoC Data Committee.

System Performance Measure 2: The extent to which persons who exit homelessness from street outreach to permanent housing destination return to homelessness.

System performance measure two evaluates recidivism, measuring the percent of returns to homelessness in people who exited from street outreach to permanent housing. Specifically, this measure looks at returns over three time periods as well as the overall number of returns over two years:

- Number returning to homelessness in less than 6 months
- Number returning to homelessness from 6 to 12 months
- Number returning to homelessness from 13 to 24 months
- Total number of returns to homelessness over 2 years

System Performance Measure 7: Successful placements from street outreach to acceptable destinations.

System performance measure seven focuses on how successful street outreach projects are at helping people move off the “street” and towards permanent housing, recognizing this process may be direct or may involve other temporary situations along the way. This is important because people living on the street and in places not meant for human habitation are at an increased risk of death. This measure calculates the percent of street outreach clients who had a positive exit as recorded in HMIS during the report period. Most destinations that move a client off the street are considered positive exits, with some minor exceptions, like jail or prison, and other places not meant for human habitation. The measure is looking for an increase in the percentage of people who exit to positive destinations from a street outreach project during the reporting period.

Positive Exits Include:

- Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher
- Foster care home or foster care group home
- Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
- Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH
- Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility
- Safe haven
- Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g. room, apartment or house)
- Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g. room, apartment or house)
- Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center
- Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)
- All permanent housing destinations

Negative Exits Include:

- Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility
- Place not meant for human habitation
- Client doesn't know, client refused, data not collected, no exit interview completed, or other

Exits that should be removed from the Denominator Include:

- Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility
- Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria

g. All Project Types

Safeguards, Safety and Needs of Special Populations

i. Victim Service Providers

The term 'victim service provider' means a private nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such organizations include rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other programs (Section 401(32) McKinney-Vento Act).

Projects serving individuals or families qualified under Category 4 of the Defining "Homeless" Rule (persons fleeing or attempting to flee violent situations) must follow all related federal and state laws, follow confidentiality policies, and have written policies and procedures regarding the provision of specific services to meet the safety and special needs of this population.

ii. Veterans

Projects serving homeless veterans must prioritize those veterans who are ineligible for Veterans Affairs (VA) services, and work closely with the local Department of Veterans Affairs and coordinate resources with VA-funded housing and services (e.g. HUD-VASH, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)). Veterans must be screened for eligibility for VA-funded housing and/or services.

Veterans who choose to enter transitional housing must be placed as a short-term option while working on a permanent housing solution. A monthly review of their individualized service and housing plan must be completed by the provider.

iii. Youth

HUD's definition of youth includes unaccompanied children under age 18 or youth between the ages of 18 and 24. Projects serving youth must prioritize youth based upon vulnerability to victimization, length of time homeless, unsheltered homeless, lack of access to family and community support networks, and current or past sexual exploitation.

It is important to note that youth are not responsible for obtaining their own eligibility documentation; instead, intake workers are responsible for documenting the youth's eligibility (including homelessness status). Further, intake workers must consider the youth's safety concerns before contacting third parties: intake workers must *not* contact anyone that the youth does not want contacted because of fears for his/her safety.

HUD's homeless assistance programs may provide emergency shelter or street outreach to unaccompanied youth who can self-certify their homelessness. CoC funded projects must be HUD approved to serve youth under Homeless Status Category 3; however, ESG funded projects do not require HUD approval for this category.

iv. High Needs

Projects serving individuals and families with very high needs must provide shelter and services that meet the special needs for these populations.

v. **Imminent Threat of Harm**

Participants who are receiving *Tenant-Based Rental Assistance* and have complied with all program requirements during their residence and who have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and who reasonably believe they are imminently threatened by harm from further domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (which would include threats from a third party, such as a friend or family member of the perpetrator of the violence), if they remain in the assisted unit, and are able to document the violence and basis for their belief, may retain the rental assistance and move to a different Continuum of Care geographic area if they move out of the assisted unit to protect their health and safety. Recipients must retain a record of the Imminent Threat of Harm for both participants who enter and exit under provisions as described at 24 CFR § 578.51(c)(3).

vi. **Education Services**

The educational needs of children and youth must be accounted for, to the maximum extent practicable, and families with children and unaccompanied youth must be placed as close as possible to the school of origin so as not to disrupt the children's education. Projects that serve homeless families with children and/or unaccompanied youth must have policies and practices in place that are consistent with the laws related to providing education services to children and youth. These recipients must have a designated staff person to ensure that children and youth are enrolled in school and receive education services, as appropriate. 42 U.S.C. 11432 et. seq. Homeless families with children and unaccompanied youth must be informed of their eligibility for McKinney-Vento education services as well as other State and local education services. Recipients shall maintain documentation in the participant's case file to demonstrate that these requirements have been met and that applicants and participants understand their rights.

Collaboration with McKinney-Vento Local Education Liaisons

Recipients must document whether school-aged children are eligible for McKinney-Vento services and whether the child is connected with a local education liaison. If the child is not already engaged, recipients must refer the family directly to the liaison at their school of choice. All applicants/participants with school-aged children must be provided with documentation that explains their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act and that provides contact information for the liaison at every school district within Ventura County.

vii. **Low-Barrier and Housing First**

Recipients that indicated in the applicable CoC Project Application that the project would follow a Low-Barrier and Housing First approach must operate the project accordingly. All other projects are strongly encouraged to use a Low-Barrier and Housing First approach to facilitate homeless individuals' and families' rapid return to housing.

A housing first approach allows eligible homeless individuals and families to enter the project without barriers, such as income or sobriety requirements, or service participation requirements. Application and admission policies should be as streamlined and short as possible to move eligible individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Projects using a housing first approach offer supportive services; however, participation in these services is based on the needs and desires of the program participant. To be considered Housing First, the project must follow a Low-Barrier approach (as

described below) *and* must *not* terminate participants from the program for the following reasons:

- Failure to participate in supportive services
- Failure to make progress on a service plan
- Loss of income or failure to improve income
- Being a victim of domestic violence
- Any other activity not covered in a lease agreement typically found in the project's geographic area

To be considered Low-Barrier, participants must *not* be screened out based on the following:

- Having too little or no income
- Active or history of substance abuse
- Having a criminal record with exceptions for state-mandated restrictions
- History of domestic violence (e.g., lack of a protective order, period of separation from abuser, or law enforcement involvement)

Persons may be terminated from the program *only* when violations of the lease are serious, and only in the most severe cases. Use of alcohol or drugs in of itself (without other lease violations) is not a reason for program termination. It is important to note that a participant may be evicted from the housing unit, but this does not mean that the recipient must terminate the participant from the program; the recipient may continue serving the participant in another housing unit.

V. Components and Eligible Activities

This section will help to determine and define the allowable activities within a project as defined by the project component under both ESG and CoC. Components define a type of project (e.g., Transitional Housing) and have a set of allowable activities (e.g., Supportive Services). Activities are a set of allowable costs. For example, a phone line for a case manager might be considered a Supportive Services activity under the Transitional Housing component for the CoC Program.

ESG and CoC Programs each have five (5) eligible components that are detailed in [Table 5.1](#) (ESG) and [Table 5.7](#) (CoC). Rapid Rehousing, Homeless Prevention and HMIS are allowable components of both funding sources; however, the activities that are allowable vary by Program. Street Outreach and Emergency Shelter are eligible under ESG only. Permanent Supportive Housing and Supportive Services Only are unique to the CoC Program. It is important to become familiar with the allowable activities under the funded component. The areas in grey are currently not being funded.

The funded components of a project are described in the contract with HUD for direct recipients or with Ventura County for Subrecipients.

a. Emergency Solutions Grant

i. Eligible ESG Components

<i>Table 5.1</i>	<i>ESG Eligible Components</i>			
Street Outreach	Emergency Shelter	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Rehousing	HMIS

ii. Eligible ESG Activities

1. Street Outreach 24 CFR § 576.101 (ESG Only)

ESG funds may be used for costs of providing essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people, referred to as Street Outreach. Eligible activities include engagement, case management, and transportation. Street outreach includes services that are unable to be provided to individuals or families due to their unwillingness to come to a shelter. Emergency health and mental health services may be eligible if these services are inaccessible or unavailable within the area.

<i>Table 5.2</i>	<i>ESG Street Outreach - Eligible Activities</i>				
<i>Essential Services</i>					
Engagement	Case Management	Emergency Health Services	Transportation	Emergency Mental Health Services	Services for Special Populations

2. Emergency Shelter 24 CFR § 576.102 (ESG Only)

Emergency Shelter is defined as any facility, where the primary purpose is to provide “a temporary shelter for the homeless in general, or for specific populations of the homeless people and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. Any project that was funded under a Fiscal Year 2010 Emergency Solutions Grant may continue to be funded under ESG (24 CFR § 576.2).” However, because of the limited number of funding sources for which emergency shelter costs are eligible, Emergency Shelter will be prioritized for funding under ESG. Eligible activities include essential services, shelter maintenance, renovation and relocation assistance (576.408).

Table 5.3				ESG Emergency Shelter – Eligible Activities			
<i>Essential Services</i>							
Case Management	Child Care	Education Services	Employment Assistance & Job Search				
Outpatient Health Services	Legal Services	Life Skills Training					
Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Treatment Services	Transportation	Services for Special Populations				
<i>Renovation</i>							
<i>Shelter Operations</i>							
<i>Assistance Required Under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970</i>							

3. Homelessness Prevention 24 CFR § 576.103 (ESG Only)

Homelessness Prevention provides housing relocation, stabilization services and short- and medium-term rental assistance necessary to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or another place described in Category 1 of the Defining “Homeless” Rule, see [Table 6.2](#). The cost of homelessness prevention are only eligible to help the participant regain stability in the program participant’s current permanent housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability in the housing. ESG financial assistance cannot be provided to a program participant receiving the same type of assistance for the same period of time from another public program.

Table 5.4		ESG Homelessness Prevention – Eligible Activities	
<i>Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services</i>			
<i>Short- and/or Medium-Term Rental Assistance</i>			

4. Rapid Rehousing 24 CFR § 576.104 (ESG)

Rapid Rehousing provides housing relocation, stabilization services and short- and medium-term rental assistance to help homeless individuals or families move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. *Please note: Rapid Rehousing varies between ESG and CoC Program Regulations. For a comparison of costs and activities between ESG and CoC Rapid Rehousing, see [Appendix D](#).*

Table 5.5		ESG Rapid Re-Housing – Eligible Activities	
<i>Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services</i>			
<i>Short- and/or Medium-Term Rental Assistance</i>			

5. *HMIS Component 24 CFR § 576.107 (ESG)*

Section 416(f) of the McKinney-Vento Act requires for the first time that ESG-funded projects participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The ESG interim rule makes certain costs eligible to the extent necessary to enable this participation. HUD published a proposed rule on HMIS, 24 CFR part 580, that will govern HMIS when it is published as final.

Please note: the HMIS Component varies between the ESG and CoC Program Regulations. See Section V.b for CoC information on the [HMIS component](#) and [HMIS eligible activities](#).

County policy is to share HMIS funds with Subrecipients. The amount available will be determined at the time of award and through the contracting process and shall be based upon funding available. If a Subrecipient receives funding allocated for HMIS costs, they must track the time spent entering HMIS data separately on a timesheet and provide back-up documentation when requested. A different line item will be provided on Subrecipient Invoices with the expectation of the HMIS time being reported separately.

6. *Administrative Costs (ESG)*

Eligible activities include accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to HUD, obtaining program audits, staff salaries associated with eligible administrative costs and ESG training for program administrator and case managers.

<i>Table 5.6</i>	<i>ESG Administrative Costs</i>
<i>Ventura County CoC retains all administrative funds to manage contracts, complete monitoring and cost reimbursement activities.</i>	

b. Continuum of Care

i. Eligible CoC Components

<i>Table 5.7</i>	<i>CoC Eligible Components</i>			
Permanent Housing (PH) <i>Including:</i>	Transitional Housing (TH)	Supportive Services Only (SSO)	HMIS	Prevention (HPC* Only)
PSH** RRH***				
*High Performing Community (as designated by HUD)				
**Permanent Supportive Housing				
***Rapid Rehousing				

1. *Permanent Housing 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(1)(CoC)*

Definition

Permanent Housing is community-based housing, the purpose of which is to provide housing without a designated length of stay. Under the CoC Program, Permanent Housing includes both Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing.

a. [Permanent Supportive Housing](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(1)(i)(CoC)

Definition

Permanent Supportive Housing provides assistance to individuals with disabilities and families in which one adult or child has a disability. Supportive Services designed to meet the needs of the participant must be made available to the participant.

b. [Rapid Rehousing](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(CoC)

Definition

CoC funds under Rapid Rehousing may be used to provide supportive services and/or short-term (up to 3 months), and/or medium-term (3 to 24 months) tenant- based rental assistance.

Please note: Rapid Rehousing varies between ESG and CoC Program Regulations. For a comparison of costs and activities between ESG and CoC Rapid Rehousing, see [Appendix D](#).

2. [Transitional Housing](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(2)(CoC)

Definition

Transitional Housing is housing that facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within 24 months.

3. [Supportive Services Only](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(3) (CoC)

Definition

Projects that contain a Supportive Services Only (SSO) component provide supportive services to unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons for whom the recipient is not providing housing or housing assistance. The lack of housing or housing assistance provision is the defining difference between a project that is considered to be an SSO project, versus a project that is considered to be a housing project even if the only activities funded under the CoC are services. The County is not currently funding projects for which this definition would apply.

4. [HMIS](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(4)(CoC)

Under the CoC Program, only the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead, in this case Ventura County, may apply for a project with an HMIS component; however, HMIS may be an eligible cost for a recipient if permitted by the contract.

Please note: the HMIS Component varies between the ESG and CoC Program Regulations. See Section V.a for ESG information on [HMIS eligible activities](#) and Section V.b for CoC information on [HMIS eligible activities](#).

5. [Prevention](#) 24 CFR § 578.37(a)(5)(CoC)

Homelessness Prevention is an eligible component under the CoC Program only for Continuums of Care that are designated as a High Performing Community (HPC) as defined by Subpart E of 24 CFR § 578. Ventura County is not currently designated as an HPC.

ii. [Eligible CoC Activities](#)

The CoC Program allows for a number of different eligible activities. Each project's ability to

expend funds for the costs listed below is limited by the project’s component, project application, Subrecipient Contract with the County and the NOFA.

Please note that the following is a list of all eligible activities under the CoC Interim Rule. Costs such as *CoC Planning Activities* and *UFA Costs* are eligible only if the County is funded for such activities, and then only the County, as the Collaborative Applicant, can bill to them. Acquisition, Rehabilitation, New Construction and Relocation are onetime costs and the County is not currently pursuing such activities due to limited funding. In the table below, activities have been shaded in grey to indicate that they are not billable.

<i>Table 5.8</i>		<i>CoC Eligible Activities</i>		
CoC Planning Activities		UFA* Costs		Acquisition
Rehabilitation		New Construction		Leasing
Rental Assistance		Supportive Services		Operating Costs
HMIS	Project Administration	Relocation Costs		Indirect Costs
<i>*Unified Funding Agency</i>				

As mentioned above, the CoC Program authorizes a variety of eligible activities; however, projects may charge costs to the grant only that are agreed upon in the contract between the Subrecipient and Ventura County or between the direct recipient and HUD. Therefore, activities that are not being utilized locally have not been included below.

<i>Table 5.9</i>		<i>CoC Eligible Activities* by Component</i>		
		PH: PSH	PH: RRH	TH
Housing Costs**	Leasing	X		X
	Rental Assistance	X	X	X
	Operating	X		X
Supportive Services		X	X	X
HMIS		X	X	X
Administration		X	X	X
Indirect Costs		X	X	X
* Refer to Eligible CoC Activities below.				
**The following Housing Costs may not be combined in the same project:				
- Rental Assistance and Leasing				
- Rental Assistance and Operating				

1. *Leasing 24 CFR § 578.49 (CoC)*

Leasing funds under the CoC Program may be used to lease a structure or individual units to provide housing or supportive services to homeless persons. Funds cannot be used to lease units or structures owned by the recipient, Subrecipient, their parent organization(s), or other organizations more fully described in 24 CFR § 578.49(a) unless

2. *Rental Assistance 24 CFR § 578.51 (CoC)*

Rental assistance funds may be used to provide homeless individuals or families with short-, medium- or long-term rental assistance as outlined below. Rental assistance cannot be provided to participants who are already receiving rental assistance, or living

in a housing unit receiving rental assistance or operating assistance through other federal, State, or local sources.

Administering Rental Assistance

Contracting for and making rental assistance payments to landlords, as well as conducting [Housing Quality Standards](#) (HQS) Inspections are considered to be a service delivery cost of rental assistance and is therefore an eligible cost under this section. Other eligible costs of administering rental assistance include: examining participant income and family composition; providing housing information and assistance; and receiving new participants into the program.

<i>Table 5.12</i>	<i>CoC Rental Assistance – Eligible Costs</i>		
<i>Length of Housing Assistance</i>			
Short-Term <i>Up to 3 months</i>	Medium-Term <i>From 3 to 24 months</i>	Long-Term <i>>24 months</i>	
<i>Model of Assistance</i>			
Tenant Based <i>Participants choose unit</i>	Sponsor Based <i>Participants reside in housing owned or leased by Sponsor</i>	Project Based <i>Units are provided through a contract with the owner</i>	
<i>Other Eligible Costs</i>			
Vacancy Payment – up to 30 days following end of the month when unit vacated	Property Damage – may not exceed one month’s rent; one-time cost per participant at the time participant exits unit	Security Deposits – not to exceed 2 months of rent	
<i>Administering Rental Assistance – Eligible Costs</i>			
Processing rental payments to landlords	Examining participant income and family composition	Providing housing information and assistance	
Inspecting units for compliance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS)		Receiving new participants into the program	

<i>Table 5.13</i>	<i>CoC Rental Assistance – Key Requirements</i>
Unit Rent Standard	The unit rent must be reasonable in comparison to similar units and cannot exceed comparable, unassisted units. <i>See Section XIII.d, Rent Reasonableness and Fair Market Rent.</i>
Unit Lease – Lease and Rental Assistance Agreement	Participants must have a lease agreement with the landlord/owner of housing. In addition, recipients may make rental assistance payments only to landlords/owners with whom the recipient has a rental assistance agreement. The rental assistance agreement must include the terms under which rental assistance will be provided, the term of the agreement, that the landlord/owner will provide the recipient with a copy of all written notices to the participant (including notices to vacate, notices of noncompliance, etc.). <i>See Section XIII.e, Housing Agreements.</i>
Participant Rent	Except in Rapid Rehousing projects, participants must contribute toward their rent in accordance with 3(a)(1) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 USC 1437a(a)(1)). Changes to rental payment amounts must be made as changes in income are identified (no less than annually). For further guidance on calculating rent, refer to Section X.g, Calculating Rent (or Occupancy Charge) .

3. *Supportive Services 24 CFR § 578.53 (CoC)*

Supportive Services funds may be used to provide supportive services that address the special needs of participants. Services must be limited to those which assist participants in obtaining and maintaining housing. Ongoing, at least annual, assessments of service needs are required and services should be adjusted accordingly. Where supportive services are provided within a facility not contained in a housing structure, the costs of operation of the facility are eligible, including maintenance, repair, building security, utilities and equipment.

The following table is a complete list of eligible costs under this component. See 24 CFR § 578.53(e) for additional details about what these costs include.

<i>Table 5.14</i>			<i>CoC Supportive Services – Eligible Costs</i>		
Annual Assessment of Service Needs	Assistance with Moving Costs	Case Management			
	Food	Housing Search & Counseling Services			
Employment Assistance & Job Training	Outpatient Services	Outreach Services			
	Education Services	Legal Services			
Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Treatment Services	Transportation			
Child Care					
Life Skills Training	Utility Deposits	Direct Provision of Services			

4. *Operating Costs 24 CFR § 578.55 (CoC)*

Operating funds may be used to pay the day-to-day costs of operation of transitional and permanent housing in a single structure or individual units. Operating costs for supportive service facilities are considered supportive services; see *Section V.b, Supportive Services*.

<i>Table 5.15</i>				<i>CoC Operating – Eligible Costs</i>			
<i>Model of Assistance</i>							
Structure				Individual Units			
<i>Eligible Costs</i>							
Repair & Maintenance	Property Tax & Insurance	Scheduled payments to reserve		Security*			
Electricity, Gas & Water	Furniture			Equipment			
<i>*Where >50% of the units are paid for with grant funds</i>							

<i>Table 5.16</i>		<i>CoC Operating – Key Requirements</i>	
Unit Rent Standard	Not applicable.		
Unit Lease	Participants must have a lease or occupancy agreement with the recipient. See <i>Section XIII.e, Housing Agreements</i> .		
Participant Rent	Agencies are not required to have participants pay rent, but if they choose to charge participants rent, the rent must be calculated in accordance with 24 CFR § 578.77, and cannot exceed the highest of 30% of the participant’s adjusted monthly income, 10% of the participant’s monthly income, or the welfare rent. For further guidance on calculating rent, refer to Section X.g, Calculating Rent (or Occupancy Charge) . Any participant rent that is collected is considered Program Income and must be used for eligible costs in accordance with 24 CFR § 578.97.		

5. *HMIS 24 CFR § 578.57 (CoC)*

HMIS funds may be used to pay the costs of contributing data to the Ventura County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Please note: the HMIS Component varies between the ESG and CoC Program Regulations. See Section V.a for ESG information on [HMIS eligible activities](#) and Section V.b for CoC information on the [HMIS component](#).

<i>Table 5.17</i>		<i>CoC HMIS – Eligible Costs</i>	
Purchasing/Leasing Computer Hardware	Purchasing Software or Software Licenses	Purchasing/Leasing Equipment (telephones, fax machines, furniture)	Obtaining Technical Support
Leasing Office Space	Electricity, Gas, Water, Phone Service, High Speed Data Transmission	Salaries for Operating HMIS	Costs of Staff to Travel and Attend HUD Sponsored/ Approved Training on HMIS
Staff travel Costs to Conduct Intake		Participation Fees Charged by the Lead	

6. *Project Administration 24 CFR § 578.59 (CoC)*

CoC-funded projects may apply to use up to 10% of their project funds to pay for administrative costs. The NOFA may further limit project requests for administrative costs. For instance, during the FY2013 NOFA, local projects were limited to requesting no more than 7% in order to receive maximum points in this section of the application.

For projects through Ventura County, administrative funds are split between the County (50%) and the Subrecipient (50%) for all projects unless determined otherwise by the County and Subrecipient.

Staff and overhead costs directly related to carrying out eligible costs are considered eligible under those activities and are not considered project administration.

<i>Table 5.18</i>		<i>CoC Administrative Costs</i>	
<i>General Management & Oversight</i>			
Preparing Budgets & Schedules	Assure Compliance	Development of Agreements to Carry Out Program Activities	
Monitoring for Progress & Compliance	Preparing HUD Reports	Coordinating Resolution of Findings	
Evaluating Results & Objectives		Managing/Supervising Staff Who Engage in General Management & Oversight	
<i>Training on CoC Requirements</i>		<i>Environmental Reviews</i>	

7. *Indirect Costs 24 CFR §578.63*

Indirect costs are eligible under the CoC Program and must be in accordance with OMB Uniform Guidance.

VI. Participant Eligibility

Eligibility for assistance under CoC and ESG Programs is determined by HUD Regulations 24 CFR § 578, and 24 CFR § 576 respectively. Eligibility is further defined by project component. The table below provides an overview of eligibility by component and funding type. Eligibility may be further restricted by the contract.

a. Eligibility by Component

<i>Table 6.1</i>	<i>Eligibility By Component</i>							
Component	Funding	Homeless Status Category*			Income**		Disability	Chronic Homeless (CH)
		1	2	4	30%			
Shelter	ESG	X	X	X	N/A			
Prevention	ESG		X	X	X			
RRH	ESG / CoC	X			Required at Revaluation Only			
Transitional	CoC	X	X	X	N/A			
PSH	CoC	X			N/A		X	Prioritized
PSH – CH Dedicated	CoC	X***			N/A		X	X

X = Required
 N/A = Not Applicable
 *Homeless Status Categories are established by the Defining “Homeless” Rule; see Table 5.2 for corresponding categories
 **Participant’s annual income may not exceed the specified % of median family income for the area (AMI), as determined by HUD
 ***Permanent Supportive Housing that is dedicated to chronically homeless households must serve only persons who qualify as chronically homeless who are coming from a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter. While persons in transitional housing are considered to be Category 1 homeless, they do not qualify as chronically homeless.

b. Homeless Eligibility Criteria

In order to receive assistance, persons must meet the HUD definition of homeless as detailed below in [Table 6.2](#) for the duration of their participation in ESG projects, and at entry for CoC projects.

<i>Table 6.2</i>		<i>Homeless Eligibility Criteria</i>	
Cat.	Description	Component	Criteria
1	Literally Homeless	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i> <i>Rapid Rehousing</i> <i>Permanent Supportive Housing</i>	A household is literally homeless if they lack fixed, regular & adequate nighttime residence, meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping in a place not designed for, or not ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation, including a car, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, an airport, or a campground. • Living in a shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements, including congregate shelters, transitional housing, hotels/motels paid for by charitable organizations, or federal/state/local government programs. • Exiting an institution such as a jail or hospital where they resided for 90 days or less AND was residing in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering the institution.
2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i> <i>Prevention</i>	A household that will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The residence will be lost within 14 days of the application for assistance • No subsequent residence has been identified; AND • The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
3	Unaccompanied Youth		
4	Fleeing or Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i> <i>Rapid ReHousing</i> <i>Prevention</i>	Households fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous or life threatening conditions related to violence, who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have no identified subsequent residence; AND • Lack the resources and support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

c. Income 24 CFR § 576.103

Income limits are based on Area Median Income (AMI) and are updated at least annually by HUD. Projects that have an income eligibility requirement must ensure they are using the most current information available. Current income limits can be found at <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>

d. Disability

In order to qualify for [Permanent Supportive Housing](#), the homeless household must have an adult or child member with a disability that meets the definition below (Docket No. FR-5333-F-02).

<i>Table 6.3</i>	<i>Disability</i>
Physical, Mental or Emotional Impairment	
A person shall be considered to have a disability if he or she has a disability that:	
(i)	is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration;
(ii)	Substantially impedes the individual’s ability to live independently;
(iii)	Could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions; and
(iv)	Is a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, or brain injury.
Developmental Disability	
A person will also be considered to have a disability if he or she has a developmental disability, as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)	
HIV/AIDS	
A person will also be considered to have a disability if he or she has acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, including infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).	
Other Considerations	
Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this definition, the term <i>person with disabilities</i> includes, except in the case of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) component, two or more persons with disabilities living together, one or more such persons living with another person who is determined to be important to their care or well-being, and the surviving member or members of any household described in the first sentence of this definition who were living, in a unit assisted under this part, with the deceased member of the household at the time of his or her death. (In any event, with respect to the surviving member or members of a household, the right to rental assistance under this part will terminate at the end of the grant period under which the deceased member was a participant.)	

e. Chronic Homelessness

Some projects under the CoC Program are specifically dedicated to or prioritized for persons with a disability who have had several episodes of homelessness or an extended duration of homeless, which is referred to as *Chronic Homelessness*. The 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness prioritized ending chronic homelessness by 2015; in February 2015, this goal was revised to 2017. The local 2010 Point in Time Count demonstrated that 234 individuals were experiencing chronic homelessness at the time of the count; in 2012 the number had dropped to 163.

i. Definition of Chronic Homelessness 24 CFR § 578.3

A homeless individual with a [disability](#) who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter and who has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter

continuously for at least twelve (12) months or on at least four (4) separate occasions in the last three (3) years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least twelve (12) months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least seven (7) consecutive nights of not living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter.

A person who meets the chronic homeless definition as described above, but who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days, and who was on the streets or in emergency shelter immediately before entering the institution, also qualifies as chronically homeless.

Chronically homeless persons also includes a family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all the criteria of chronic homelessness, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

<i>Table 6.4</i>		<i>Duration of Homelessness</i>
Duration	Definition	
Continuous, for at least twelve (12) months		
On the streets or in emergency shelter continuously, without a break, for at least twelve (12) months		
Continuous	A stay on the streets or in emergency shelter without a break.	
Break	At least seven (7) or more consecutive nights not residing on the streets or in emergency shelter. Stays in institutional care facilities for fewer than 90 days do not constitute a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the 12-month total, as long as the individual was living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility.	
Twelve (12) Continuous Months	Twelve (12) consecutive calendar months. NOTE: If the person has a documented encounter with a homeless service provider on a single day within a given month, this is sufficient to consider the person homeless for the entire calendar month, unless there is evidence of a break in homelessness. This applies ONLY if the encounter is documented by third-party documentation – a self-declaration is insufficient.	
At least four (4) separate occasions in the last three (3) years where the combined occasions equal at least twelve (12) months		
On the streets or emergency shelter on four (4) separate, distinct, and sustained occasions in the last three (3) years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least twelve (12) months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least seven (7) consecutive nights of not living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter		
Occasion	Separate and Distinct	Stay on the streets or in emergency shelter is interrupted by a Break (period of seven (7) or more consecutive nights residing in a place other than on the streets or in emergency shelter).
	Sustained	Stay on the streets or in emergency shelter is more at least one (1) night.
Three (3) years	Thirty-six (36) consecutive calendar months	
Twelve (12) Total Months	Four (4) separate occasions on the streets or emergency shelter that equal a cumulative total of twelve (12) months, meaning twelve (12) calendar months.	

ii. [Chronically Homeless Veterans](#)

The Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) conducts an initial verification of status and subsequently provides services to qualified veterans through a single episode of care. This VA “episode of care” may consist of services provided by different VA providers and/or different VA programs. Veterans who have been identified as chronically homeless through the VA’s initial intake maintain this status throughout his/her episode of VA care. Therefore, projects that are dedicated to or prioritized for chronically homeless persons may serve a person documented as chronically homeless by the VA, no matter the services received during his/her episode of VA care (i.e., a project may serve a person identified as chronically homeless by the VA, even if (s)he was in VA-transitional housing).

iii. [Chronic Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing](#)

Persons identified as chronically homeless prior to enrolling in a rapid rehousing project *maintain* their status as chronically homeless while they receive rapid rehousing assistance. However, chronic homelessness must be documented (as described in Section VII, [Documentation Standards](#)) prior to entering the rapid rehousing program. Therefore, projects that are dedicated to or prioritized for chronically homeless persons may serve a person who is receiving rapid rehousing assistance as long as his/her chronic homeless status was documented prior to entering the rapid rehousing project.

f. [Special Considerations for Serving a Person Who May be Undocumented](#)

Eligibility for the receipt of public benefits is restricted by The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 which provides that people who are undocumented are not to receive public benefits. The Act further specifies how to inquire into a person’s status. However, programs that are necessary for the protection of life or safety, which provide short-term shelter or housing assistance, non-cash services at the community level, which is not means-tested are exempt.

This exemption does not apply to permanent housing programs however. HUD clarifies this matter through the SHP Desk Guide as such, “[...] nonprofit organizations are not required to, but may, verify an applicant’s citizenship or immigration status before providing assistance. If a nonprofit elects to verify citizenship or immigration status, they must follow the procedures required by the Act and should consult with their legal counsel on how to comply.”

g. [Special Considerations for Households if Individual Members are Residing in Different Places](#)

Persons presenting together as a household may be served together, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity. Refer also to Section III.b.iv, [Discrimination Based on Household Composition](#).

The implications of this are that household members may be residing in different places at entry. In order to determine the household’s eligibility for assistance, the recipient must determine eligibility based on the status of:

1. The adult head of household; or
2. The minor head of household when no adult is present.

If there is more than one (1) adult in the household, the household may choose which adult is considered to be the head of household for the purposes of determining eligibility.

Please note that the person, whose eligibility qualifies the entire household, must meet all of the applicable eligibility requirements for the project.

Refer also to HUD's Frequently Asked Question,
<https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/2318/how-should-recipients-determine-a-family-eligibility-for-assistance/>.

VII. Documentation Standards for Eligibility for Assistance

a. Eligibility Overview

Participants must be deemed eligible as described in Section VI, [Participant Eligibility](#). The tables below describe the required documentation for each funding source and project component and details the type of documentation required to meet federal requirements and local standards. Required documentation must be clearly noted and documented in the participant’s case file. The County has developed standard forms that may be used by recipients to document eligibility; these forms are located on the County’s Continuum of Care Program website.

b. Homeless Verification

Intake staff are required to document homelessness for all persons seeking assistance. Determination and documentation of eligibility must be based on homeless status at intake; intake is the time the individual or family enters the project and begins receiving assistance under the grant program.

Unless otherwise noted, the general order of priority for obtaining evidence is third-party documentation first, intake worker observations second, and certification by the person seeking assistance third. However, for homeless assistance projects that provide emergency assistance, such as emergency shelter and street outreach, a lack of third-party documentation must not prevent an individual or family from being immediately admitted. Persons seeking emergency assistance may certify his/her homelessness via sign-in sheet.

Cat.	Description	Component	Documentation
1	Literally Homeless	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Rapid Rehousing</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i> <i>Permanent Supportive Housing</i>	1. Written observation by outreach worker of the conditions where the individual or family is living; OR 2. Written referral by another housing or service provider; OR 3. Certification by the household seeking assistance/self-declaration*. 4. For households exiting an institution – one of the above AND discharge paperwork or written/oral referral, OR written record of intake worker’s due diligence to obtain evidence AND self-declaration* by individual that they exited institution.

2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Prevention</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i>	1. Court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the household they must leave; OR 2. For household leaving hotel/motel that they were paying for, evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; OR 3. Documented and verified oral statement; AND <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Certification that no subsequent residence is identified; AND b. Self-declaration* or other written documentation that the individual lacks the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing.
4	Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence	<i>Emergency Shelter</i> <i>Prevention</i> <i>Transitional Housing</i>	<p>For victim service providers:</p> Self-declaration/oral statement by the household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing, they have no subsequent residence, and they lack resources. The statement must be certified by intake worker. <p>For non-victim service providers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-declaration/oral statement by household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing, they have no subsequent residence, and they lack resources. 2. If the household is not jeopardized, the oral statement that the household is fleeing must be verified by intake worker or by written referral by an organization from which assistance was sought for domestic violence.
<p>*Self-Declarations must generally be accompanied by intake worker documentation of due diligence to obtain third-party verification.</p>			

Due Diligence

Written documentation of due diligence must describe efforts to obtain third-party documentation (e.g. phone logs, email correspondence, copies of certified letters), and must be signed and dated by intake staff as true and complete.

Due diligence is not defined by HUD; locally, it is interpreted to mean making reasonable attempts to obtain third-party documentation. Intake workers must document these reasonable attempts, the outcome of the effort, and obstacles encountered. "Reasonable attempts" means that the intake worker, with the assistance of the applicant, creates a comprehensive list of third parties who may have knowledge of the applicant's homelessness, and that more than one (1) attempt was made to contact each identified third-party.

c. Disability Verification

<i>Table 7.2</i>	<i>Disability Verification</i>
	1. Written verification of the disability from a professional licensed* by the state to diagnose and treat the disability and his or her certification that the disability is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration and substantially impedes the individual’s ability to live independently; OR
	2. Written verification from the Social Security Administration; OR
	3. The receipt of a disability check; OR
	4. Intake staff-recorded observation of a disability that, no later than 45 days of the application for assistance, is confirmed and accompanied by evidence (as outlined in this table number 1, 2, 3 or 5)**; OR
	5. Other documentation approve by HUD.
	*An exception to the licensing requirement is made only for persons certified as a Chemical Dependency Professional (CDP), as defined in Chapter 18.205 RCW; this exception does not extend to a certified Chemical Dependency Professional – Trainee (CDP-T).
	**Recipients are discouraged from admitting participants into their project without confirmation of a qualifying disability and documented evidence of that disability. Recipients that choose to admit participants under Category 4 of the table above, do so at their own risk. If confirmation of disability and evidence are not attained within 45 days, the recipient will not be reimbursed for costs incurred for that participant.

d. Special Considerations for Documenting Chronic Homelessness

For each person applying to the project, written documentation must be provided by an appropriate third party that verifies the person’s status as chronically homeless. Letters may be written and signed by either homeless shelter providers, homeless outreach workers or other homeless service providers. An HMIS printout that demonstrates that the individual or family meets the criteria for chronic homelessness may be substituted for a letter. Letters and HMIS printouts must:

- ✓ Be on letterhead stationery with the name, address and phone number of the agency;
- ✓ Contain the full name of the participant;
- ✓ Contain dates verifying the timeframe of homelessness including both a start date and completion date; and
- ✓ Be signed by a staff member whose title appears on the letter.

If all other efforts to obtain third-party documentation have been exhausted and unsuccessful, a participant self-declaration may be used in the absence of any other documentation. However, this should be a rare exception to the composition of most homelessness records for participants; recipients must document their attempts to obtain documentation in order to demonstrate due diligence and must document the severity of the situation in which the individual has been living. Self-declarations should be used only in the rarest and most extreme cases (e.g. where the individual has been in a place not meant for human habitation in a secluded area without any contact with anyone for that period). For at least 75 percent of the chronically homeless households assisted by a recipient in a project during an operating year, no more than three (3) months of living on the streets or emergency shelter may be documented by self-declaration.

Recipients should expect that chronic homeless documentation for the majority of participants will be pieced together from several sources.

i. Documenting Duration of Homelessness

To properly document the length of time homeless, documentation must include the start and end date of each occasion of homelessness.

<i>Table 7.3</i>		<i>Documenting Duration of Homelessness</i>	
Definition		Documentation	
Continuous, for at least twelve (12) months: On the streets or emergency shelter continuously, without a break, for at least twelve (12) months.		At least nine (9) of the 12 months must be documented through third-party documentation.	
At least four (4) separate occasions in the last three (3) years: On the streets or emergency shelter on four (4) separate, distinct, and sustained occasions in the last three (3) years.		Breaks in homelessness may be documented through self-certifications.	
		<p><u>NOTE: third-party documentation of a single encounter with a homeless service provider on a single day within one (1) month is sufficient to consider an individual as homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter for the entire calendar month (e.g., a documented encounter on May 5, 2015, counts for May 1 to May 31, 2015).</u></p>	

ii. Documenting Disability

Refer to Disability Verification, [Table 7.2](#) above.

iii. Documenting Severity of Service Needs for Prioritization

Chronically homeless individuals or families with the most severe service needs must be prioritized for permanent supportive housing projects. Severe service needs must be identified and verified through data-driven methods such as an administrative data match or through the use of a standardized assessment tool that can identify the severity of needs, such as the Investing in Futures Housing Assessment. This determination must be based on the severity of the needs of the individual, not on a specific diagnosis or disability type.

Further information regarding documenting Chronic Homelessness can be found in HUD’s Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing and Recordkeeping Requirements for Documenting Chronic Homeless Status, located at:

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=14-12cpdn.pdf>

Refer also to HUD’s Defining Chronic Homelessness Final Rule, located at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule.pdf>

VIII. Changes in Household Composition

Projects are frequently targeted to serving specific homeless populations and/or subpopulation(s) per the project application, contract, and/or applicable regulations. For instance, one project may be targeted to serve homeless individuals while another may be targeted to serve homeless families with children. Please note that in targeting services to a specific population, recipients must comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights laws. Occasionally, a household that is enrolled in the project subsequently desires to change their household composition (e.g., add or remove a household member). Recipients must follow these policies and procedures in approving or disapproving requests to change household composition.

For the purposes of these Local Standards, the following definitions apply.

<i>Table 8.1</i>	<i>Applicable Definitions</i>		
Definition	Description		
Family	Family includes, but is not limited to, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity, any <i>group of persons</i> presenting for assistance together with or without children and irrespective of age, relationship, or whether or not a member of the household has a disability. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family. Refer also to Section III.b.iv, Discrimination Based on Household Composition .		
	Projects serving families may be targeted to serve households with children, households without children, or households with only children; however, projects may not discriminate against homeless households with children.		
	A household with children is composed of at least one adult and one child (minor under the age of 18).	A household without children is composed of multiple adults, but no children under the age of 18.	A household with only children is composed of multiple persons, all of whom are under age 18.
Individual	An individual is a single person, who may be an elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person.		
	Projects serving individuals may be targeted to serve households without children or households with only children; however, projects may not discriminate against homeless households with children.		
	A household without children is composed of a single adult only.	A household with only children is composed of a single person under age 18.	

a. Documenting Homelessness

At project entry, intake staff *must* obtain documentation of homelessness (or chronic homelessness) for the head of household (or other household member, as applicable) in order to establish eligibility. After enrollment, new household members *may* be permitted to join the household. However, minimum considerations should be taken into account. Refer to Section VIII.b, [Household Composition Considerations](#).

If the original household seeks to add member(s) to the household, intake staff should, to the extent possible, obtain documentation of homelessness (or chronic homelessness) for any new members of the household. This is particularly important in the event of a household break-up subsequent to enrollment: the project is permitted to continue serving (albeit separately) those household members that continue to need the housing/services offered and whose eligibility was documented at entry.

b. Household Composition Considerations

Changes in household composition raise several issues that must be considered prior to permitting the change. Refer to the Table below for examples of minimum considerations.

<i>Table 8.2</i>		<i>Minimum Considerations</i>	
Consideration	Description		
Fair Housing	Projects must follow fair housing laws and requirements. Refer to Section III.b., Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity .		
Eligibility	The new family member(s) need not meet the eligibility requirements of the project, unless expressly required by the application, contract, or regulation, as long as the head of household’s eligibility was documented at entry. Refer to Section VI, Participant Eligibility .		
Terms of Occupancy	The terms of occupancy (i.e., lease agreement) must not prohibit a change in household composition. Refer to Section XIII.e, Housing Agreements .		
Housing Requirements	The unit must meet all applicable housing requirements, such as suitable dwelling size. Refer to Section XIII, Housing Requirements .		
Rent or Occupancy Charges	The income of all household members must be considered where participants pay rent or an occupancy charge. Refer to Section X., Determining Income and Calculating Participant Rent .		

c. Transfers to Suitable Units

If a change in household composition causes the unit to be unsuitable (i.e., of unsuitable dwelling size, etc.), transfers to a suitable unit may be made within the same project. If the recipient cannot accommodate the household within the same project, the recipient must contact Ventura County for further guidance.

IX. Shared Housing

Projects may serve separate families in a shared housing situation; this is a situation where a family chooses to live in a unit with another family, both of whom do not wish to be considered together as one (1) family. This type of shared housing situation may be particularly appealing for participants of rapid rehousing projects, where the goal is for participants to maintain housing without an ongoing subsidy.

For shared housing situations, the following requirements must be followed.

Table 9.1		Shared Housing Requirements	
Requirement	Description		
Choice	The decision to live in shared housing must be the families' choice. The separate families must also determine that they do not wish to be considered together as one (1) family.		
Eligibility	For all project types, with the exception of rapid rehousing, each family must be eligible for the project (except for reasonable accommodations). For rapid rehousing projects, only the assisted family must be eligible. In a rapid rehousing project where an eligible family shares a housing unit with an ineligible family, assistance may not be provided on behalf of an ineligible family. Refer to Section VI, Participant Eligibility .		
Housing Requirements	The unit must meet all applicable housing requirements, such as suitable dwelling size. Refer to Section XIII.		
Unit Rent	The cost and size of the unit must be reasonable and appropriate. Refer to Section XIII.d., Rent Reasonableness and Fair Market Rent .		
Rent or Occupancy Charges and Rent Subsidies	Where participants pay rent (or an occupancy charge) or receive a rent subsidy, each family's rent/rent subsidy will be calculated separately. The income of all family members must be considered where participants pay rent or an occupancy charge. Refer to Section X., Determining Income and Calculating Participant Rent .		

X. Determining Income and Calculating Participant Rent

a. Income Definition

Income must be calculated in accordance with 24 CFR § 5.609, and deductions must be made in accordance with 24 CFR § 5.611(a). Income is money that is paid to, or on behalf of, the head of household or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other household member, and are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and which are not specifically excluded in 24 CFR § 5.609(c) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

Documents and information collected to verify income should be recent. Documentation dated within 30 days is acceptable. However, for public assistance benefits, (e.g., SSI, food stamps), a benefits statement received any time within the twelve months prior to the time of application and reflecting current benefits received by a household is allowed. A copy of a recent bank statement indicating direct deposit is also acceptable.

b. Income Inclusions Examples

<i>Table 10.1</i>		<i>Income Inclusions Examples</i>	
<i>Not an exhaustive list; refer to 24 CFR § 5.609(b)</i>			
(1)	The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services;		
(2)	The full amount of periodic payments received from social security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits and other similar types of periodic receipts, including lump sum payment for delayed start of a periodic payment;		
(3)	Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay;		
(4)	Welfare assistance. Welfare or other payments to families or individuals, based on need, that are made under program funded, separately or jointly, by Federal, State or local governments (e.g., Social Security Income (SSI) and general assistance available through state welfare programs);		
(5)	Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from persons not residing in the dwelling;		
(6)	Net income from the operation of a business or profession;		
(7)	Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real and personal property;		
(8)	All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces, except special hostile fire pay.		

c. Income Exclusions

Table 10.2		Income Exclusions	
<i>Not an exhaustive list; refer to 24 CFR § 5.609(c)</i>			
(1)	Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years;		
(2)	Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone);		
(3)	Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses (except as provided in paragraph (b)(5) of this section);		
(4)	Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;		
(5)	Income of a live-in aide, as defined in 24 CFR § 5.403;		
(6)	Subject to paragraph (b)(9) of this section, the full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;		
(7)	The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;		
(8)	Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD;		
	Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS);		
	Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program;		
	Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time;		
	Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program;		
(9)	Temporary, nonrecurring or sporadic income (including gifts);		
(10)	Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era;		
(11)	Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse);		
(12)	Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child;		
(13)	Deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and social security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts.		
(14)	Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit;		
(15)	Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home; or		
(16)	Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in 24 CFR § 5.609(c) apply.		

<i>Table 10.3</i>		<i>Mandatory Deductions</i>
<i>Refer to 24 CFR § 5.611(a)</i>		
(1)	\$480 for each dependent;	
(2)	\$400 for any elderly family or disabled family;	
(3)	The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds three percent of annual income:	
	(a)	Unreimbursed medical expenses of any elderly family or disabled family; and
	(b)	Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) to be employed. This deduction may not exceed the earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older and who are able to work because of such attendant care or auxiliary apparatus; and
(4)	Any reasonable child care expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education.	

d. Income Review Requirements

Refer to Section X.g., [Calculating Rent](#), for further detail. For projects providing rental assistance, participants must agree to supply the information or documentation necessary to verify the participant’s income. Participants must also provide the recipient with information at any time regarding changes in income or other circumstances that may result in changes to a participant’s contribution toward rent. Refer to 24 CFR § 578.77(c)(3).

<i>Table 10.4</i>		<i>Income Review Requirements</i>
Funding	Activity	Frequency
ESG	Rental Assistance	Initially, annually and as changes in income are identified
CoC	Leasing	Initially, annually and per tenant request for change in household composition or decrease in income
	Operating	
	Rental Assistance	Initially, annually and as changes in income are identified

e. Annualizing Wages and Periodic Payments

When calculating income based on hourly, weekly, or monthly payment information, add the gross amount earned in each payment period that is documented and divide by the number of payment periods. This provides an average wage per payment period. Depending on pay periods used by the employer or the schedule of periodic payments, the following calculations convert the average wage into annual income:

- ✓ Hourly Wage multiplied by Hours Worked per Week multiplied by 52 weeks
- ✓ Weekly Wage multiplied by 52 weeks
- ✓ Bi-Weekly (every other week) Wage multiplied by 26 bi-weekly periods
- ✓ Semi-Monthly Wage (twice a month) multiplied by 24 semi-monthly periods
- ✓ Monthly Wage multiplied by 12 months

Standards and procedures for documenting **Income** are further detailed in [Appendix A](#).

f. Calculating Rent (or Occupancy Charge)

Guidelines for charging participants rent (or an occupancy charge) are dependent on the funding source, component, and activity type. While participants *must* be charged rent in some circumstances (i.e., CoC-permanent supportive housing providing *rental assistance*), participants *may* be charged rent in other circumstances (i.e., CoC-leased permanent supportive housing); however, under no circumstances may participants be charged a “program fee.” A program fee includes any fee assessed by the recipient other than rent (or an occupancy charge); examples include: fees for laundry or cleaning services, child care, transportation, or case management.

Table 10.5		Rent (or Occupancy Charge) Calculations		
Funding	Component	Activity	Required to Charge Rent?	Calculation
ESG	Rapid Rehousing	Rental Assistance	Yes	According to Rapid Rehousing Guide .
	Prevention	Rental Assistance	Yes	Prevention projects must use a Graduated Subsidy Model. Policies will be developed at the time that the Ventura County Continuum of Care chooses to fund projects under this component.
CoC	Rapid Rehousing	Rental Assistance	Yes	According to Rapid Rehousing Guide .
	Transitional Housing	Leasing	No, but may	May not exceed the highest of (rent may not be rounded up): 1) 30 percent of the family’s monthly adjusted income; 2) 10 percent of the family’s monthly income; or 3) If the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of such payments, adjusted in accordance with the family’s actual housing costs, is specifically designated by such agency to meet the family’s housing costs, the portion of such payments which is so designated.
		Operating	No, but may	
	Permanent Supportive Housing	Rental Assistance	Yes	Rent must be calculated in accordance with section 3(a)(1) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 USC 1437a(a)(1)): A family shall pay as rent the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar: A) 30 percent of the family’s monthly adjusted income; B) 10 percent of the family’s monthly income; or C) If the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of such payments, adjusted in accordance with the family’s actual housing costs, is specifically designated by such agency to meet the family’s housing costs, the portion of such payments which is so designated.

g. Utility Allowances

In calculating participant rent, a utility allowance must be applied where the cost of utilities (excluding telephone) are not included in the rent. The public housing authority establishes the utility allowance schedule annually for Ventura County. Apply the utility allowance for the appropriate unit size. Refer to Section XIII.b., [Suitable Dwelling Size](#).

This requirement is not applicable for ESG-Rapid Rehousing.

h. Program Income

Program income is considered to be any rent (or occupancy charges) and any other income that is received by the recipient directly generated by a grant-supported activity. Program income must be retained by the recipient, committed to the project, and used to cover any eligible costs (not limited to the costs identified in the project budget). For ESG-projects, program income may be used to meet the match requirement. By contrast, for CoC-projects, program income generally may *not* be used to meet the match requirement; however, for FY2015 and FY2016 CoC Program awards, HUD has permitted program income to be used as match: costs paid for by program income can be considered match for grants awarded in the FY2015 and FY2016 CoC Program Competition only, so long as the funds are expended on eligible CoC Program costs that supplement the recipient's project.

XI. Termination of Participation, Denial and Grievance Procedures

Recipients must have written termination, denial, and grievance policies and/or procedures. The policies and/or procedures should be readily available to applicants and participants of assistance. With the exception of high volume shelters where it is acceptable to have policies posted in a public place, applicants and participants must receive written information about program policies. It is important to effectively communicate these policies and/or procedures to ensure that they are fully understood.

✓ Denial and Grievance

Causes of denial of assistance include, but are not limited to, the person's ineligibility or failure to provide verifiable evidence of eligibility, etc. Established procedures should describe:

- Circumstances in which persons may not qualify or would be denied;
- Notification of denial; and
- A person's right to review a recipient's decision.

✓ Termination of Participation and Grievance

Involuntary termination from any project funded under the HEARTH Act places the participant at great risk because (s)he will likely exit to a place that is less safe than the project in which (s)he is currently participating. Termination is a last option. Recipients are encouraged to limit rules of participation to only that which constitutes immediate danger. For example, in a communal living project, it would not be appropriate to terminate a participant's housing because (s)he did not complete her/his chores. Recipients are encouraged to find other strategies to increase participants' contributions to their community by encouraging engagement rather than threatening loss of housing.

That being said, there may be instances where termination cannot be avoided. The written grievance procedure must include:

- Written notice to the participant containing a clear statement of the reason(s) for termination;
- A review of the decision, in which the participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision. This may include the participant's right to question or confront staff involved; and
- Prompt written notice of the final decision.

For projects where participants are required to request a review of the termination decision, participants must be given an adequate amount of time to submit their request. The review must be held at a mutually agreeable time.

XII. Confidentiality of Participant Records

Recipients must have policies and/or procedures to ensure that participant records, including electronic records, are maintained in a confidential manner as per RCW 43.185C.030, 24 CFR § 578.103(b), and 24 CFR § 576.500(x), and keep records or files pertaining to participants under lock and key with designated personnel only granted access to those documents. All records that contain protected identifying information (e.g. Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, etc.) of persons applying for and/or receiving housing and/or services must be kept secure and confidential.

The procedures must also ensure that the address or location of any family violence project will not be made public, except with written authorization of the person responsible for the operation of the project; and that the address or location of any housing of a participant will not be made public, except as provided under a preexisting privacy policy of the recipient and consistent with State and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

XIII. Housing Requirements

a. Inspection Requirements

All housing assisted with ESG and CoC Program funds must meet the minimum housing standards; housing standards vary by Program and component type.

i. Emergency Shelter (ESG)

Projects that receive ESG funds for shelter operations must comply with minimum safety, sanitation and privacy standards as outlined in 24 CFR § 576.403. Inspections to ensure compliance must be done before assistance is provided and at least annually.

ii. Rapid Rehousing (ESG)

Projects providing ESG-Rapid Rehousing assistance are required to perform Habitability Standards inspections and maintain documentation of these inspections as defined in 24 CFR § 576.403(c). These inspections must be done before assistance is provided and at least annually. Recipients of ESG-Rapid Rehousing may adopt more stringent requirements that exceed or add to the requirements in 24 CFR § 576.403(c). HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection procedures *are not* considered sufficient because HQS is less stringent in the areas of fire safety and interior air quality. However, the HQS form may be amended to include the more stringent safety and interior air quality requirements. A record of the inspections must be kept for each assisted unit and must be readily available.

iii. Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing (CoC)

All CoC-housing, including transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and rapid rehousing must meet applicable housing quality standards (HQS) under 24 CFR § 578.75(b). HQS requirements are contained within [24 CFR § 982.401](#), which state the performance and acceptability criteria for the key aspects of housing quality listed in [Table 11.1](#).

<i>Table 13.1</i>		<i>Housing Quality Standards – Key Aspects</i>	
Sanitary facilities		Food preparation and refuse disposal	
Space and security		Thermal environment	
Illumination and electricity		Structure and materials	
Interior air quality		Water supply	
Access		Site and neighborhood	
Sanitary condition		Smoke detectors	

Physical inspections of units to ensure compliance with HQS must be completed prior to the issuance of assistance. Additionally, recipients must inspect all units at least annually (at least every twelve (12) months) to ensure ongoing compliance with HQS. Deficiencies must be remedied within thirty (30) days of inspection, with the exception of emergency failures, which must be corrected within twenty-four (24) hours, see below. Payment may not be issued beyond the annual recertification date for units that do not meet HQS.

For housing leased with CoC Program funds, or for which rental assistance payments are made with CoC funds, recipients must comply with applicable conflict of interest requirements and shall not conduct HQS inspections of property that the recipient or a related entity owns. See 24 CFR § 578.95(c).

Emergency Fails

The following deficiencies constitute an emergency fail and repairs must occur and be verified within twenty-four (24) hours (rather than the standard thirty (30) days) of inspection (24 CFR 982.401(a)).

- Lack of security for the unit
- Waterlogged ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- Natural gas leaks or fumes
- Electrical problem which could result in shock or fire
- No heat when outside temperature is below 40°F and the temperature inside the unit is below 55°F
- Utilities not in service
- No running hot water
- Broken glass where someone could be injured
- Obstacle which prevents entrance or exit
- Lack of functioning toilet
- Inoperable smoke detector

b. Suitable Dwelling Size

Recipients must establish guidelines for establishing the appropriate unit size; these guidelines must be applied consistently for all participants of like size and household composition. Agency

standards cannot have a disproportionate impact on specific family composition (i.e., non-traditional households).

Participants must be placed in units that are of suitable size: the unit must have at least one (1) bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two (2) persons. 24 CFR § 578.75(c). Children of opposite sex, other than very young children, may not be required to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room. 24 CFR § 578.75(c)(1).

Participants should be assisted in choosing a unit with the smallest number of bedrooms needed without overcrowding. Except in limited circumstances (i.e., request for reasonable accommodation, etc.), participants should not be assisted in units with a greater number of bedrooms than is needed.

If household composition changes during the term of assistance, households should be assisted in relocating to a more appropriately sized unit and continue to access appropriate services. 24 CFR § 578.75(c)(1). Refer also to Section VIII.c, [Transfers to Suitable Units](#).

c. Lead-Based Paint Requirements

Recipients must ensure that all participants who reside in housing that was constructed pre-1978 receive the “Protect Your Family” lead-based paint hazard brochure. In addition, owners must disclose the presence of lead-based paint and provide participants with any existing documentation on known lead-based paint hazards in the unit. Recipients must document that participants received this information and maintain this documentation in the participant files. Refer also to [Appendix C: Step by Step Guide to Compliance with Lead Based Paint Inspection Requirements](#).

i. Visual Assessments

The lead-based paint visual assessment requirement exists to protect vulnerable families from potential health hazards. To prevent lead poisoning in young children, recipients must comply with the Lead-based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 1973 and its applicable regulations found at 24 CFR § 35.

The applicable parts of 24 CFR § 35 are as such:

1. For ESG-funded shelters and housing occupied by project participants, recipients must comply with subparts A, B, H, J, K, M and R.
2. For CoC-funded housing that receives project-based or sponsor-based rental assistance, recipients must comply with subparts A, B, H, and R.
3. For CoC-funded residential property receiving leasing, services or operating costs, recipients must comply with subparts A, B, K and R.

A lead-based paint visual assessment must be completed for all units that meet the three following conditions:

1. The household moving into or remaining in their current unit is being assisted with either ESG rent/utility assistance, ESG arrears assistance, CoC rent assistance, or it is a residential property using CoC funds to fund leasing, services or operating costs.
2. The unit was constructed prior to 1978.
3. A child under the age of six or a pregnant woman is, or will be, living in the unit.

For units and facilities that meet these conditions, recipients must conduct a visual assessment at least annually. For rental units, a visual assessment must be conducted prior to providing rent assistance and on an annual basis thereafter (as long as assistance is provided). The recipient must maintain the record on file with the inspection's record and readily available for review.

Visual assessments must be conducted by a HUD-Certified Visual Assessor. Agency staff may complete the Visual Assessment Training at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/training/visualassessment/h00101.htm>. The certificate of completion must be maintained on record and readily available for review. For rental units, documentation must be kept with the HQS or Habitability Standards Worksheet and maintained in the participant file.

ii. Exceptions to the Requirement

There are certain exceptions to the requirement. Visual assessments are not triggered under the following circumstances:

- It is a zero-bedroom or SRO-sized unit;
- X-ray or laboratory testing of all painted surfaces by certified personnel has been conducted in accordance with HUD regulations and the unit is officially certified to not contain lead-based paint;
- The property has had all lead-based paint identified and removed in accordance with HUD regulations;
- The unit has already undergone a visual assessment within the past 12 months –obtain documentation that a visual assessment has been conducted; or
- It meets any of the other exemptions described in 24 CFR § 35.115(a).

If any of the conditions outlined above are met, recipients need to document the condition.

d. Rent Reasonableness and Fair Market Rent

Where applicable, adherence to rent reasonableness and/or Fair Market Rent (FMR) must be determined before assistance is provided and no less than annually.

When determining rent reasonableness and Fair Market Rent, recipients must compare the unit's gross rent with the applicable standard. Gross rent includes the entire housing cost: rent plus the cost of any utilities that must (according to the lease) be the responsibility of the tenant. Utilities include gas, electric, water, sewer, and trash, and exclude telephone, cable, or satellite television service, and internet service.

Rent Reasonableness

All ESG- and CoC-units and structures for which rent is paid must be reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable unassisted units in the same market; reasonable rents must also not exceed rents currently being charged by the same owner for comparable unassisted units.

Fair Market Rent

Annually (effective October 1), HUD determines Fair Market Rent (FMR) by geographic area; FMRs are based on the results of a local rent survey and reflect the gross rent estimates (rent plus the cost of all tenant-paid utilities, except telephones, cable or satellite television service, and internet service). Ventura County falls within the Ventura County HUD Metro FMR Area.

Fair market rents are published here: <http://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>

<i>Table 13.2</i>		Unit Rent Standard By Component	
Activity	Funding	Requirement	Frequency of Review
Leasing	CoC	<p>Rent Reasonable The unit’s gross rent must be rent reasonable. Units with gross rents that exceed rent reasonableness standards may not be leased with CoC funds.</p> <p>Fair Market Rent As long as the unit’s gross rent is rent reasonable, the gross rent <i>may</i> exceed FMR; however, the amount paid with CoC-leasing funds may not exceed the current published FMR. Therefore, if the gross rent exceeds FMR, CoC leasing funds may pay for a portion of the rent up to the FMR amount and the difference must be paid with other, non-CoC funds.</p> <p>Maximum CoC-Leasing Payment The maximum amount of rent that can be paid for with CoC-leasing funds is the lower of the rent reasonableness standard and FMR.</p>	Initially, Annually
Rental Assistance	CoC	<p>Rent Reasonable The unit’s gross rent must be rent reasonable. Units with gross rents that exceed rent reasonableness standards may not be assisted with CoC-rental assistance funds.</p> <p>Fair Market Rent As long as the unit’s gross rent is rent reasonable, the gross rent and the amount paid with CoC-rental assistance funds <i>may</i> exceed FMR.</p> <p>Maximum CoC-Rental Assistance The maximum amount of rental assistance that can be paid for with CoC-funds is the rent reasonableness standard.</p>	Initially, Annually
Rental Assistance	ESG	<p>Rent Reasonable The unit’s gross rent must be rent reasonable. Units with gross rents that exceed rent reasonableness standards may not be assisted with ESG-rental assistance funds.</p>	Initially, Annually

		<p>Fair Market Rent The unit's gross rent must be equal to or less than the FMR. Units with gross rents that exceed FMR may not be assisted with ESG-rental assistance funds.</p> <p>Maximum ESG-Rental Assistance The maximum amount of rental assistance that can be paid for with ESG-funds is the lower of the rent reasonableness standard and FMR.</p>	
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e. Housing Agreements

Different types of housing agreements are required depending on the component and activity.

i. Lease Agreements

Participants must have a written lease agreement with the landlord/owner of the housing unit (or for CoC-leasing projects, a written sublease with the recipient). For CoC-permanent housing, in addition to the minimum requirements listed below, the lease must be for a term of at least one (1) year that is renewable (for a minimum term of one (1) month) and terminable only for cause. For CoC-transitional housing, in addition to the minimum requirements listed below, the lease must be for a term of at least one month that ends in 24 months and cannot be extended.

At a minimum, written lease agreements must contain:

- Name of participant
- Name of landlord/owner
- Address of dwelling unit
- Occupancy (who is permitted to live at the dwelling unit)
- Term of agreement (lease start and end dates)
- Dwelling unit rent and date due
- Deposits (if any, and for what/term)
- Signature of participant/date
- Signature of landlord/owner/date

ii. Master Lease Agreements (CoC Leasing)

Where units or structures are leased with CoC leasing funds, the recipient must have a master lease agreement with the landlord/owner. For CoC-leasing projects, the lease agreement between the recipient and participant is a sublease agreement; therefore, the master lease agreement must permit subleases. The master lease must be written, legally binding, and must allow the required lease agreement provisions (as described above) to be met.

iii. Rental Assistance Agreements (ESG- and CoC-Rental Assistance)

Recipients may make rental assistance payments only to landlords/owners with whom the recipient has a rental assistance agreement. The rental assistance agreement must include the terms under which rental assistance will be provided, the term of the agreement, that the landlord/owner will provide the recipient with a copy of all written notices to the

participant (including notices to vacate, notices of noncompliance, etc.). For a sample rental assistance agreement, refer to Attachment B.

XIV. Recordkeeping Requirements

In order to receive assistance, the following information must be documented in the participant file. Documentation must be retained for five (5) years after the expenditure of all funds from the grant under which the participant was served, unless a greater period of time is specified in the contract.

a. Initial Consultation & Eligibility Determination

The participant must lack sufficient resources and support networks to obtain/retain housing and this must be documented in the file. The participant must receive an initial consultation and eligibility assessment to determine housing status eligibility (and other eligibility requirements, as applicable) and the appropriate type of assistance needed to regain stability in permanent housing.

b. Income and Participant Rent

Please see Section X, [Determining Income and Calculating Participant Rent](#), for full detail. Income documentation and completed calculations of participant rent must be maintained in each participant file; forms must be signed and dated by the staff person who completed the calculation.

c. Housing Stability Plan

The Housing Stability Plan (ESG-Emergency Shelter, ESG-Prevention, CoC- and ESG-Rapid Rehousing) must include:

- ✓ Needs assessment to identify barriers and specific housing and self-sufficiency goals
- ✓ Action steps to retain permanent housing after assistance ends
- ✓ Households receiving assistance from a victim service provider may be exempted from the case management requirement.

d. Individual Support Plan

The Individual Support Plan (CoC-Transitional Housing and CoC-Permanent Supportive Housing) must include:

- ✓ Problem Identification
- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Action Plan
- ✓ Outcomes

Per 24 CFR § 578.53, projects must complete an assessment of the service needs of participants at least annually. Services must be adjusted accordingly.

e. Assistance in obtaining mainstream and other resources

Participants must receive appropriate supportive services and referrals essential to achieving independent living through other federal, state, local, and private assistance.

f. Proof of Complete Inspection

Please see Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#), for full detail.

- ✓ [Habitability \(ESG\)](#)
- ✓ [Housing Quality Standards \(CoC\)](#)

Completed inspection forms must be retained in the file and must contain the date the inspection was performed and the signature of the staff person who performed the inspection.

g. Proof of Complete Lead Based Paint Visual Assessment

See Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#), for full detail. Completed assessments must be retained in the file and must contain the date the inspection was performed and the signature of the staff person who performed the inspection.

h. Rent Reasonableness and Fair Market Rent

See Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#), for full detail.

Rent Reasonableness

Documentation of rent reasonableness ensures that rents being paid are reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable unassisted units in the same market. Please see [Appendix B](#) for further detail.

Recipients must:

- ✓ Use the Rent Reasonableness Certification Form (Attachment A) to document rent reasonableness
- ✓ Retain a copy of each Ventur County Rent Reasonableness Survey every year, beginning in
- ✓ Retain documentation of any supplemental documents used to compare rents i.e. copies of advertisements for properties for rent, etc.

Fair Market Rent

Recipients must ensure that client files contain applicable FMR data to document the FMR for the participant's unit size and geographic area.

Recipients must:

- ✓ Use the Rent Reasonableness Certification Form (Attachment A) to document FMR

i. [Housing Agreements](#)

See Section XIII, [Housing Requirements](#), for full detail. Fully executed housing agreements must be maintained for each unit that is assisted.

j. [Case Notes and record of services received](#)

Files must contain case notes that align with either the Housing Stability Plan or the Individual Support Plan, be legible, dated and contain a record of the staff member responsible for each note.

k. [Homeless Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#)

Agencies providing CoC and ESG assistance must enter client-level data into the HMIS system for reporting data to HUD. A comparable database may be used to collect data for domestic violence or victim services. Emergency Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, Rapid Re-Housing and Street Outreach must be tracked in the HMIS system. Further information is detailed in section XVI.

XV. Reporting Requirements

Subrecipients shall follow the reporting requirements as outlined in the contract or MOU.

Recipients shall participate in Ventura County Continuum of Care activities, which includes participation in planning activities, and the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count of the homeless. Recipients will complete the Ventura County Annual Homeless Housing Inventory Chart (HIC), which includes data on beds, units, HMIS participation, services, and financial data on all projects.

An Annual Performance Report (APR) is currently required for the CoC Program and will be required for ESG. An ESG CAPER report will be required. With the exception of Victim Service Providers, which are required to track required data in a comparable database, the majority of the data required for the APR will be generated from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Recipients are required to report on financial data and provide narratives regarding their project(s). ESG Subrecipients are required to complete and submit a semi-annual budget report. The details of these reports will be outlined in future drafts of these guidelines. The most recent APR must be submitted to HUD no later than 90 days from the date of the end of the project's grant term.

Subrecipients will report Match detail in a format prescribed by the CoC. Matching contributions may be obtained from any source, including any Federal source other than the ESG program, as well as State, local and private sources. Please reference CFR 576.201 for further information on matching requirements.

Subrecipients will report Program Income detail on their monthly or quarterly invoice to the County.

The County reserves the right to request additional information or prescribe or change reporting requirements.

XVI. Homeless Management Information Systems Participation

Recipients will participate in the Ventura County Homeless Management Information System (“Ventura County HMIS”) which is administered by the County’s Human Services Agency. Ventura County HMIS is an electronic database that collects data on homeless persons who receive outreach, homelessness prevention and intervention services, emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive services not linked with housing, and permanent supportive housing.

HMIS Participation will include:

- Technical set up;
- Staff training;
- Development of and adherence to an HMIS implementation schedule;
- Adherence to the requirements set forth in the [Ventura County HMIS Policy and Procedures Manual](#) including:
 - Confidentiality
 - Privacy and Security Protocols
 - Adherence to the Data Quality Plan
- Adherence to the requirements set forth in the “Agency Partner Agreement” and “User Policy, Code of Ethics and Responsibility Statement” executed by the Recipient and the Recipient’s staff.

XVII. Performance Standards

Ventura County, as the Collaborative Applicant (CA), establishes performance standards for CoC- and ESG-funded projects in consultation with its Subrecipients. Performance standards are established by project type, based upon HUD’s national targets, as well as local targets that account for the unique needs of the homeless population and subpopulations within the Ventura County. To set these performance targets, the CoC reviews HUD established performance areas, including those for High-Performing Communities and those included in the application review criteria in the CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), as well as HMIS and performance data for CoC- and ESG-funded projects. See the Ventura County Continuum of Care Performance Standards, incorporated herein by reference.

The County will monitor project performance on an ongoing basis through HMIS data as well as annually through the Annual Performance Report (APR). In addition:

- Annually, for CoC-funded projects, after HUD has published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), the CoC Data, Performance & Evaluation Committee scores projects locally and recommends projects for funding. See *Section II, [Policy on Project Selection](#)*. Project data, including project performance, is compiled for County and PRC review.
- Once Subrecipients are selected and projects begin operating, the County utilizes a Program Monitoring Tool – Subrecipient Risk Assessment to assess whether Subrecipients qualify as “high risk,” which is determined, in part, by a review of project performance.

The County will take the following action against poor performers:

- Provide technical assistance (TA)

- Provide a corrective action plan if:
 - o TA is not implemented by the Subrecipient; or
 - o The poor performance is of serious concern; or
 - o Prior TA was not followed by the Subrecipient.
- Review all necessary materials and conduct on-site visit(s) as needed
- Follow contracting procedures for suspension or termination of the Contract if the Subrecipient fails to respond and correct the issue(s)
- Request funds be returned if necessary and appropriate.

Appendix A

Income Eligibility Documentation Standards

While Ventura County has established standards for various types of income, the County recognizes that in some instances only applicant self-declaration may be possible. This method should be used only as a *last resort* when all other verification methods are not possible or reasonable. **When using applicant self-declaration, Projects must document why a higher verification standard was not used. Be sure to include this in the case file.**

Gross Income is the amount of income earned before any deductions (such as taxes and health insurance premiums) are made.

Current Income is the income that the household is currently receiving. Income recently terminated should not be included.

Type of Income	Acceptable Types of Documentation
Wages and Salary	<p>Obtain copy of most recent pay stub(s) and include in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Written 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Mail, fax or email verification of income request to employer. At a minimum, written verification must include: name of employer and participant name, pay amount and frequency, average hours worked per week, amount of any additional compensation and be signed and dated by employer. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Oral 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Contact the employer by phone or in person. At a minimum, oral verification must include: name of employer and participant name, pay amount and frequency, average hours worked per week, amount of any additional compensation and be signed and dated by staff who obtained the information. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency, and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>
Self-Employment and Business Income	<p>Obtain copy of most recent federal and state tax return from the applicant and keep copy in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>

<p>Interest and Dividend Income</p>	<p>Obtain copy of most recent interest or dividend income statement from participant and keep copy in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>Obtain copy of most recent federal and state tax return from the applicant and keep copy in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>
<p>Pension/Retirement Income</p>	<p>Obtain copy of most recent payment statement or benefit notice from Social Security, pension provider or other source. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Written 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Mail, fax or email verification of income request to Social Security, pension provider or other source. At a minimum, written verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Oral 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Contact the source by phone or in person. At a minimum, oral verification must include: Name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>
<p>Unemployment and Disability Income</p>	<p>Obtain copy of most recent payment statement and or benefit notice. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Written 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Mail, fax or email verification of income request to unemployment administrator, workers compensation administrator of former employer. At a minimum, written verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Oral 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Contact the source by phone or in person. At a minimum, oral verification must include: Name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p>

	<p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>
TANF/Public Assistance	<p>Obtain copy of most recent payment statement and or benefit notice. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Written 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Mail, fax or email verification of income request to welfare administrator. At a minimum, written verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Oral 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Contact the source by phone or in person. At a minimum, oral verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>
Alimony, Child Support, Foster Care Payments	<p>Obtain copy of most recent payment statement, notices or orders. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Written 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Mail, fax or email verification of income request to child support enforcement agency, court liaison or other source. At a minimum, written verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Oral 3rd Party Verification</i></p> <p>Contact the source by phone or in person. At a minimum, oral verification must include: name of income source, income amount and be signed and dated by income source representative. Copy kept in participant file.</p> <p><i>OR Self Declaration</i></p> <p>Obtain signed and dated self-declaration from the participant. At a minimum must include source of income, income amount and frequency and be signed. Copy kept in participant file. Case manager must document attempts to obtain written and oral verification.</p>

Appendix B

Rent Reasonableness Policies and Procedures

(Adapted from HUD's Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Grant Guidelines)

Determining and Documenting Rent Reasonableness: Determining and documenting rent reasonableness is required under CoC and ESG for leasing and rental assistance projects. Rent reasonableness must be documented prior to executing the lease for an assisted unit and at least annually thereafter. Recipients must document the assisted unit's rent reasonableness using the Rent Reasonableness Certification form; this completed form must be maintained in each client file to demonstrate that the assisted unit met the rent reasonableness standard.

Below describes the methodology, staffing, data sources, documentation requirements, and special circumstances that recipients must use to determine and document rent reasonableness.

Methodology: In order to demonstrate that the assisted unit is rent reasonable, recipients must compare the assisted unit's rent to the rent of at least **three (3)** comparable unassisted units in the area *and* must also compare the assisted unit's rent to rents currently being charged by the same owner for comparable unassisted units. Methodologies for obtaining comparable rents include:

- Utilizing the Dupre & Scott Rent Reasonableness Survey (in order to be considered reliable, the survey must indicate that at least three (3) buildings were surveyed);
- Obtaining comparable rents on a unit-by-unit basis from other data sources when the Rent Reasonableness Survey is considered unreliable; and
- Obtaining documentation from property owners/managers on current rents charged in comparable unassisted units.

Staffing: The responsibility of determining and documenting rent reasonableness should be assigned to program staff in the following order of preference:

1. Staff conducting the housing inspection will be responsible for determining and documenting rent reasonableness.
2. The case manager will be responsible for determining and documenting rent reasonableness.

Strategies for Determining Appropriate Comparable Properties: Each and every certification of rent reasonableness must consider the following:

- *Location:* It is important that, not only are the properties close in proximity, but that they have similar access to services such as bus lines, grocery stores, etc. and are within the same school boundaries where possible.
- *Square Footage*
- *Unit Type:* Single Family, Duplex, Town House, Low-Rise, High-Rise, Manufactured Home, etc.
- *Quality and Condition of the Unit:* Quality of floor coverings, cabinets, appliances, windows and doors as well as how well the unit has been maintained may make units more or less desirable and may affect the amount of rent the unit commands.

- *Accessibility*

- *Amenities/Facilities:*

The following amenities/facilities may have an effect on the amount of rent the unit commands assuming that it is in good repair and desirable within the market:

- Garbage Disposal
- Dishwasher
- Off-Street Parking
- Storage Outside of Unit

- Washer/Dryer in Unit
- Patio/Balcony/Deck
- Fenced Yard
- Playground
- Covered/Garage Parking
- Laundry Facilities
- Club House
- Pool
- Fireplace
- *Age of the Unit and Year of Renovation*
- *Utilities*

Data Sources: Acceptable data sources used in determining rent reasonableness include the following:

- Dupre & Scott Rent Reasonableness Survey;
- Newspaper ads (including internet versions of newspaper ads);
- Classified Ads;
- Weekly or monthly neighborhood or shopper newspapers that have rental listings;
- “For Rent” signs in windows or on lawns;
- Real estate agents; and
- Property management companies that handle rental property.
- Rental Listing websites including:
 - www.apartmentguide.com
 - www.apartments.com
 - www.forrentmag.com
 - www.move.com/apartment/main.aspx

Utilizing the Dupre & Scott Rent Reasonableness Survey: The Dupre & Scott Rent Reasonableness Survey is updated every spring. The survey is a helpful way to understand the overall rental market of an area and can be a good starting point for certifying rent reasonableness. The certifier must follow these steps in utilizing the survey:

- Correctly identify the area the proposed unit is in according to the “Ventura County Areas for Data Presentation” section of the survey;
- Navigate to the appropriate pages which list the data for the identified area;
- Identify the correct unit size based on the number of bedrooms;
- Identify the correct building type based on the number of units the building contains;
- The average rent is listed on the right hand side of the page on the corresponding row of the survey.

Important factors to consider when utilizing the survey:

- Some unit types and areas have very limited data. This may be because the area has few rental units, such as Area 8: Goldbar/Sultan. Or, it may be that the unit type is not common, such as a one bedroom, one unit building. Each building type under each unit type lists the number of buildings that were included in the survey. If less than three (3) buildings were included in that data point, further analysis is necessary to properly document rent reasonableness; this analysis must be documented on the Rent Reasonableness – Supplemental form.
- For the Rent Reasonableness Survey, Dupre & Scott have defined building types as follows:
 - Buildings with fewer than 20 units:
 - Single family home
 - Duplex
 - Triplex
 - 4-19 unit complexes
 - Building with 20 or more units:
 - Lo-rise building: 20 or more units and one (1) or two (2) stories tall
 - High-rise building: 20 or more units and three (3) or more stories

It is important to note that the Dupre & Scott building type definitions differ from the definitions under the [Housing Quality Standards \(HQS\) and the utility allowance schedule](#). For the purposes of verifying rent reasonableness, the building, for example, may be considered a high rise, but for HQS and utility allowance, it may be considered a low-rise. The building type for HQS and utility allowance must match, but may be different than rent reasonableness.

Data in Rural Areas: While there may be fewer rental units in rural areas than in urban and suburban areas, it is possible to find comparable rents or establish rent payment standards for different unit types located in these areas.

- One source of rental housing data for rural areas may be the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Agency. USDA provides direct and guaranteed loans for single and multi-family housing development in rural areas as well as for farm laborers. Contact information for Rural Development State and Local Offices or USDA Service Centers is available at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html. Each Rural Development Office, if it has a Rural Housing component, should have information on the types of rental housing available in various communities throughout the state, as well as unit sizes and rents.
- Another potential source of comparable rent data are real estate agents. Local real estate agents are not only knowledgeable about real estate prices but often are a source of information on rental housing in the area. They may be able to extrapolate rent comparables based on the general cost of housing in the area. To find real estate agents active in particular communities, Projects can consult the National Association of Realtors on the web at <http://www.realtor.org/>. For demographic information on the housing stock, market trends, etc., projects should access <http://www.realtor.org/research>.

Strategy for Addressing Special Cases: There may be instances where the above methodology and process is not sufficient to establish rent reasonableness for a particular unit.

For example, staff may find in rural areas that there are only one or two comparable units instead of the three (3) units specified by the protocol.

Recipients may use alternative methods to determine and document rent reasonableness in the following circumstance:

- In rural areas where it may be difficult to find three (3) comparable units.
- In assessing units with an accessibility feature that the tenant requires due to a disability where it may be difficult to find three (3) comparable units.

Documentation Requirements: The following documentation is required to determine rent reasonableness and must be kept in the participant file:

- Rent Reasonableness Certification Form
- Rent Reasonableness – Supplemental and backup documentation (i.e., copies of advertisements of units for rent, etc.) used to compare rents

Agencies must maintain a copy of the Dupre and Scott Rent Reasonableness Survey in the event of an audit.

Special Note Regarding Fair Market Rent: The gross rent (rent + utility allowance) for units receiving rental assistance from ESG funds, and leasing funds from the CoC Program cannot exceed the HUD Determined Fair Market Rent (FMR). Programs using rental assistance funds from the CoC Program should generally not exceed FMR.

Appendix C

Step by Step Guide to Compliance with Lead Based Paint Inspection Requirements

Childhood lead poisoning is a major environmental health problem in the United States, especially for low-income families in poor living conditions. If not detected early, children with high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from damage to the brain and nervous system, behavioral and learning problems (such as hyperactivity), slowed growth, hearing problems, and headaches. To prevent lead-poisoning in young children, Lead/Sub Grantees must comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 1973 and its applicable regulations found at 24 CFR § 35, Parts A, B, M, and R.

Disclosure Requirements

Disclosure requirements are triggered for ALL properties constructed prior to 1978. These requirements require that lessors (property owners or managers) provide tenants with:

- Disclosure form for rental properties disclosing the presence of known and unknown lead-based paint;
- A copy of the “Protect Your Family from Lead in the Home” pamphlet.

Both the disclosure form and pamphlet are available at:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/enforcement/disclosure.cfm>

Sharing this information with your participants (or ensuring they have received it from property owners/managers) is an easy thing to do. This is an important opportunity to educate participants about the potential hazards related to lead and their rights as tenants. Informed tenants are more likely to watch for potential problems in their home and proactively work with landlords to address any issues.

Visual Assessment

Visual assessments are only triggered under certain circumstances:

- The leased property was constructed before 1978;
AND
- A child under the age of six (6) will be living in the unit occupied by the household receiving assistance.

Determining the Age of the Unit

Projects should use formal public records, such as tax assessment records, to establish the age of a unit. These records include the year built or age of the property and are available online at:

<http://assessor.countyofventura.org/research/propertyinfo.asp>

Remember to print out a copy of the screenshot for the case file. If you have trouble finding this information online, contact your local Office of Tax and Revenue for assistance. If not available online, the information is public and can be requested from the local authorities. (Note, the taxing authority and the assessment entity may be separate governmental entities and office names vary by locality).

Conducting a Visual Assessment

A visual assessment must be conducted prior to providing rent assistance to the unit and on an annual basis thereafter (as long as assistance is provided). Visual assessments must be conducted by a HUD-Certified Visual Assessor. It is important to note that a HUD-Certified Visual Assessor is not equivalent to a Certified Clearance Examiner. Anyone may become a HUD-Certified Visual Assessor by successfully completing a 20-minute online training on HUD's website at:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/training/visualassessment/h00101.html>

The training teaches individuals how to identify deteriorated paint and how deteriorated paint must be treated. Projects may choose to have their program staff complete the visual assessments, or they may procure services from a contractor.

Making Assistance Determinations

If a visual assessment reveals problems with paint surfaces, Project cannot approve the unit for assistance until the deteriorating paint has been repaired. At this point, Projects must make a decision: work with the property owner/manager to complete needed paint stabilization activities and clearance, work with the household to locate a different (lead-safe) unit, or refer the participant to a different program if assistance cannot be provided.

Locating a Certified Lead Professional and Further Training

To locate a certified lead professional in your area:

- Call your state government (health department, lead poison prevention program, or housing authority).
- Call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).
- Go to the US Environmental Protection Agency website at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/flpp/> and click on "certified abatement/inspection firms."

Lead professionals, training providers, and HUD-sponsored Lead Safe Work Practices training listings can be accessed at www.leadlisting.org or 1-888-LEADLIST.

For more information on the Federal training and certification program for lead professionals, contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.html> or 1-800-424-LEAD to speak with an information specialist.

The Lead Safe Housing Rule as well as a HUD training module to help recipients of funds effectively implement the requirements of the Lead Safe Housing Rule in their programs can be accessed at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/training/web/leadsafe/>

Appendix D

Comparison of Rapid Rehousing Under ESG and CoC

	<i>Rapid Rehousing – Eligible Costs</i>	
	ESG - RRH	CoC - RRH
Rental Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term (up to 3 months) • Medium-term (4 to 24 months) • Rent Arrears (one-time for up to 6 months, including late fees) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term (up to 3 months) • Medium-term (4 to 24 months)
Type of Rental Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant based • Project based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant based only
Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services	<p>Financial Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental application Fees • Security Deposits (up to 2 months) • Last month’s rent • Utility Deposits and payments (up to 24 months, including 6 months of arrears) • Moving costs <p>Service Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Search and Placement • Housing stability case management • Mediation • Legal services • Credit repair • Budgeting • Money Management 	<p>Financial Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security deposits (up to 2 months) • First and last month’s rent <p>Supportive Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case management • Child Care • Education services • Employment assistance and job training • Food • Housing search and counseling services, including mediation, credit repair, and payment of rental application fee • Legal services • Life skills training • Mental health services • Moving costs • Outpatient health services • Outreach services • Substance abuse treatment services • Transportation • Utility deposits

Rental Assistance Overview		
	ESG – RRH Rental Assistance (24 CFR § 576.104)	CoC – RRH Rental Assistance (24 CFR § 578.37(a)(1)(ii))
Housing Standards	Units must pass HUD Habitability Standards	Units must pass HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS)
Fair Market Rent (FMR)	Rental unit may cover up to FMR for rental unit	Rent Reasonableness is the rent standard
Rent Reasonableness	Units must comply with HUD’s rent reasonableness standards	Units in a structure must comply with HUD’s rent reasonableness standards
Lease Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written lease between the owner and the participant is required for TBRA and PBRA. • For participants living in housing with PBRA, the lease must have an initial term of one year. There is no minimum lease period for TBRA. • The only exception to the written lease requirement is in the case of rental assistance provided solely for rental arrears. 	Participants receiving TBRA must sign a lease of at least one year that is renewable (for a minimum term of one month) and terminable only for cause.
Written Standards	<p>Recipients and Subrecipients must implement written policies and procedures for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining and prioritizing which eligible families and individuals will receive RRH assistance • Determining the amount or percentage of rent and utilities each participant must pay • Determining how long a particular participant will be provided with rental assistance and whether and how the amount of that assistance will be adjusted over time 	<p>Recipients and Subrecipients must consistently follow policies and procedures established for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining and prioritizing which eligible families and individuals will receive RRH assistance • Determining the amount or percentage of rent each participant must pay • Determining the maximum amount or percentage of rental assistance that a participant may receive • Determining the maximum number of months that a participant may receive rental assistance • Determining the maximum number of times that a participant may receive rental assistance • Determining the extent to which a participant must share the cost of rent

Rent Reasonableness Certification

Tenant Name _____

I. Unit Information

Proposed Unit Address and Number

Landlord Name and Address

Date Unit Built: _____ Number of Bedrooms _____ Square Feet _____

Amenities, unit condition, and accessibility (i.e. handicap, etc): _____

II. Establishing Gross Rent

1. Type of Unit (Garden, High Rise, Duplex, Town House, Single Family etc.): _____

2. Published Fair Market Rent (FMR): \$ _____

3. Owner's Proposed Contract Rent: \$ _____

(a) Allowance for tenant-furnished utilities, if any \$ _____

(b) Gross Rent \$ _____

4. Owner's Most Recent Rent Charged \$ _____

(a) Did this rent include all utilities? _____ Yes _____ No (If No, explain) _____

(b) Amount of increase over rent, if any? \$ _____

(c) Reason for rent increase? _____

(d) Owner's reason for increase in rent justified? Yes _____ No _____

Does this rent include all utilities? _____ Yes _____ No (If No, explain) _____

(e) What method was used to determine that the rent being proposed for this unit is not more than the amount charged for other unassisted units? _____

III. Rent Survey

According to the Ventura County Rent Reasonableness Survey, which area is this unit located in? # _____

What is the Average Rent for this area according to the Survey? \$ _____

Is the Proposed Rent less than the Avg. Rent for the Area?

_____ Yes (Stop here, complete and sign the certification at the end of the document)

_____ No (If No, the unit may not be Rent Reasonable, further analysis is required. Do not sign below. Complete and attach Supplemental Section IV)

Based on the Rental Survey, I have determined that the proposed rent for the unit [] IS [] IS NOT reasonable.

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____

Rent Reasonableness - Supplemental

IV. Comparable Units (Supplemental Analysis)

The Proposed Rent for the unit was above the Average Rent for the Area according to the Survey, due to the following factors:

The survey contained less than 3 buildings for this unit type in this area and therefore is unreliable.

The unit is significantly newer than the units that were surveyed or has recently been renovated.

The unit has better than average amenities.

The unit is Accessible.

Other. Explain: _____

The specific units listed below are a more accurate reflection of the market for the proposed unit.

	Proposed Unit		Unit #1		Unit #2		Unit #3	
Source of Information								
Address								
Number of Bedrooms/Bathrooms								
Square Feet								
Type of Unit (Low-Rise, Hi-Rise, Single Family, Duplex etc.)								
Housing Condition								
Location/Accessibility								
Amenities (List):								
Yr Built/Renovated								
Utilities Not Included in Rent (E,W,S,G,T)								
Unit Rent	\$		\$		\$		\$	
Utility Allowance	\$		\$		\$		\$	
Gross Rent	\$		\$		\$		\$	
Handicap Accessible?								

Based on a comparison with rents for comparable units, I have determined that the proposed rent for the unit [] IS [] IS NOT reasonable.

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____

Rental Assistance Agreement

This Rental Assistance Agreement is entered into between

_____ (“Agency”) and _____ (“Owner”).

The purpose of this Agreement is to assist the Household identified in Section I below to lease a decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling unit from Owner. Agency will make rental assistance payments to the Owner on behalf of Household in accordance with this Agreement.

I. Dwelling Unit and Household

This Agreement applies only to the Household and Dwelling Unit designated below. Owner has leased the Dwelling Unit to the Household through a separate and distinct lease agreement.

Dwelling Unit (“Unit”)

Head of Household

II. Term of Agreement

The term of this Agreement shall begin on _____ and shall end upon 30 days written notice from Agency.

III. Rental Assistance Payment

The Agency agrees to pay a portion, as determined and calculated solely by the Agency, of the Unit rent. This amount is subject to change at any time during the term of this Agreement. Any portion of the rent that is paid by Agency will be paid to Owner on or about the first day of the month for which the Unit rent is due. The rental assistance payment is equal to the difference between the Unit rent and the rent paid by the Household; at no time shall the rent paid by the Household and the rental assistance payment exceed the Unit rent. The Agency assumes no obligation for the Unit rent, or payment of any claim by the Owner against the Household, for damages or other amounts owed to the Owner.

IV. Notification to the Agency

During the term of this Agreement, Owner agrees to provide Agency with a copy of the following documentation:

- A. Amendments to the lease agreement between the Owner and the Household, including but not limited to, changes in rent, utilities, ownership or mailing address; and
- B. Notices to the Household, including but not limited to, notices to comply, terminations of tenancy, or eviction.

Agency:

Signature

Typed/Printed Name of Representative

Date

Landlord/Owner:

Signature

Typed/Printed Name of Representative

Date