

**Housing First Checklist<sup>1</sup>**

**1. LOW BARRIER AND DISABILITY ACCESS**

- Few to no programmatic prerequisites to permanent housing entry**

Access to programs is not contingent on:

- Minimum income requirements
- Sobriety
- Compliance or completion of treatment
- Participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions
- Lack of a criminal record
- Entering a transitional housing program to enter permanent housing

- Low Barrier Admission Policies:** Programs or projects do everything possible not to reject individuals or families based on:

- Poor credit or financial history
- Poor rental history and past evictions
- Criminal histories
- Behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a “lack of housing readiness”
- Housing programs may have tenant selection policies that prioritize people who have been homeless the longest or who have the highest service needs as evidenced by vulnerability assessments or the high utilization of crisis services

- Access for People with Disabilities**

- Are offered clear opportunities to request reasonable accommodations within application and screening processes and during tenancy
- Building and apartment units include special physical features that accommodate disabilities

**2. VOLUNTARY SERVICES and PROGRAM RETENTION**

- Supportive services are voluntary, but can and should be used to persistently engage tenants to ensure long-term housing stability**

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<sup>1</sup> **Adapted from:** Housing First Checklist: Assessing Projects and Systems for a Housing First Orientation, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Updated September 2016.

- Participation in services or compliance with service plans are not conditions of program participation/tenancy
- Housing and service goals and plans are highly consumer/tenant driven and consumer/tenants are the primary authors of their services plan
- Services plans are reviewed with consumers/tenants and regularly offered as a resource to them
- Program prioritizes engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals
- Consumer/tenants are offered opportunities to review program policies and formal processes and provide feedback, suggestions or grievances

**2. HARM REDUCTION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**

- Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction are part of participants' lives**
  - Programs are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding consumers/tenants' drug and alcohol use
  - Programs use harm reduction techniques to address and mitigate the harms of drug and alcohol use
  - Consumers/Tenants are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices
  - Substance use in and of itself, without other problematic behaviors, is not considered a reason for program termination or housing eviction.
  - Motivational interviewing is offered in helping consumers/tenants build motivation for any problematic change and to utilize new skills and information

**4. SPECIFIC TO HOUSING**

- Projects move people into housing as quickly as possible, streamlining application and approval processes and reducing wait times
- Tenants must have a lease that is compliant with local laws/tenant laws
- Tenants are educated about their lease terms, given access to legal assistance, and encouraged to exercise their full legal rights and responsibilities
- Tenants are given reasonable flexibility in paying their share of rent on time and offered special payment arrangements for rent arrears and/or assistance with financial management, including representative payee arrangements

- Tenants are offered the opportunity to transfer from one housing situation, program, or project to another if a tenancy is in jeopardy
- Projects have a tenant association or council to review program policies and provide feedback
- Whenever possible, eviction back into homelessness is avoided