

# City of Portland Strategy

## Housing Access & Stabilization: Shelter & Emergency Services

The goal of this program is to offer people who are experiencing homelessness, particularly those with special needs, immediate safety off the streets, and to provide them with shelter, meals, direct access to supportive services and linkage to transitional or permanent housing.

### Shelter & Emergency Services Needs

The need for Shelter & Emergency Services is documented in this Plan's Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis

### Shelter & Emergency Services Program Description

Shelter & Emergency Services offers immediate safety off the streets and provides shelter, meals, direct access to supportive services and linkage to transitional or permanent housing.

The services available vary from program to program. Some programs offer only basic shelter on a night-to-night basis, including inclement weather shelter, and the warming centers.

Most City- and County-funded programs offer longer stays, individualized assessments, case management services, and housing placement, as well as on-site access to specialized services such as alcohol and drug treatment, mental health, and employment programs. Some offer rent assistance to support successful transition to permanent housing, as well as home-based follow-along services after placement in permanent housing. All of these publicly-funded programs are required to demonstrate effectiveness at moving people to permanent housing.

Note that Alcohol and Drug Free Housing is included in the Supportive Housing strategy.

As part of PHB's commitment to promoting equity, PHB is reviewing and evaluating outcome data from all programs to make sure that people of color are able to access City-funded services and have rates of success that are comparable to rates for white clients. PHB is also increasing its efforts to provide culturally appropriate services that will engage people with diverse backgrounds and needs.

### Program Tools

- Initial assessments and appropriate referrals
- Meals
- Case management/individualized plans to achieve goals
- Guest beds with specialized services provided by partner organizations
- Sleeping facilities (including severe weather and seasonal shelter)
- Permanent housing placement services
- Household furnishings, or help accessing furnishings & household supplies
- Follow-up/retention support
- Short-term rent assistance

- Linkage to mental health services or on-site mental health services
- Linkage or direct access to medical care and medications
- Linkage to benefits assistance and employment services
- Linkage or direct access to alternative health care
- Linkage to chemical dependency services and detox
- Tuberculosis testing
- Transportation assistance
- The Bud Clark Commons
- Transitional housing units (except alcohol and drug free units)
- Family unification services (transitional housing only)
- Children's services (transitional housing only)
- Child care (transitional housing only)
- Life skills training (transitional housing only)

### **Project Selection**

The City of Portland currently renews funding for agencies carrying out Shelter & Emergency Service activities, provided that the contractual obligations have been met and that the project outcomes have been successful. The City may choose to reduce or eliminate funding to an agency that does not meet contractual obligations, or that administers a project that fails to meet outcome goals. If an existing program does not fit with the Bureau's objectives, the agency may be asked to change its program design. The City may also transition to a competitive RFP process. The City does not plan to initiate other large on-going Shelter & Emergency Service programs.

Some Emergency Shelter Activities are funded with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds. Pursuant to Federal regulation, ESG funds must be matched by local funds. In FY 2012-2013, total ESG is \$782,156. Approximately \$419,634 will be available for Shelter & Emergency Services, with the remainder allocated to Rapid Re-housing and general administration activities. Local match invested in homeless program areas may include approximately \$9.5 million in City of Portland General Fund, and \$1.1 million in CDBG, and \$387,000 in HOME for a total of more than \$11 million, well exceeding the required match for ESG funded projects.

### **Program Eligibility**

Single adults, youth and families who are homeless are eligible for shelter and emergency services. The City of Portland funds Shelter and Emergency Services primarily for adult men and adult women and also provides City general funds for youth shelter and transitional housing. Multnomah County is the lead funder and oversight body for the Homeless Youth System, programs for homeless families with children, and domestic violence programs. Shelter and emergency services for large families with children and people with motor disabilities are available through the Short Term Rent Assistance Program administered by Home Forward.

Housing services for large families with children and people with motor disabilities are available through Multnomah County's motel voucher program. Unfortunately, shelter and emergency services are extremely limited for couples, people with pets, or in non-traditional families.

## **Potential Barriers**

The availability of shelter and emergency services assumes that resources continue to be available. Large budget deficits at the federal and state levels may prompt reductions in resources. In addition, many of our community partners rely upon charitable contributions to cover a portion of their costs. The high rate of unemployment in Portland may affect the level of charitable contributions.

## **Partner Agencies and Organizations**

- Multnomah County oversees the homeless youth system, the domestic violence system and the programs that serve homeless families with children. It also operates the family warming center.
- Home Forward operates the Bud Clark Commons.
- Transition Projects, Inc. operates the day center and men's shelter located at the Bud Clark Commons.
- The Red Cross operates emergency shelter in hazardous weather conditions.
- Many non-profit organizations provide housing and services to people experiencing homelessness. The faith community provides shelter and food to many homeless people.

## **Complementary Local, Regional and National Efforts**

The Shelter & Emergency Services program is part of the local Continuum of Care. The program's increased emphasis on linking clients to permanent housing is consistent with local, state and national initiatives to end homelessness. Because HUD has not yet issued regulatory guidance regarding the definition of centralized or coordinated assessment systems the program does not yet attempt to respond to ESG requirements for coordination with such systems.

## **Geographic Service Areas**

### **(including areas of low-income families and/or racial/minority concentration)**

Facilities offering emergency housing and services for adults and homeless youth are located in downtown Portland and in the Central East Side. Shelter facilities have good proximity to other essential services via public transportation. Family emergency housing and services, overseen by Multnomah County, are spread across Multnomah County, with services in NE Portland, N Portland, Inner SE Portland, Outer SE Portland/Gresham, NW Portland and SW Portland.

## **Monitoring**

A description of PHB's Monitoring program is in Section One.

