



CT's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (CT HPRP)

BACKGROUND

As a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was charged with administering just over \$1 billion in new funding for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). HUD awarded a total of just over \$17 million of that funding in Connecticut. The State of Connecticut's portion of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funding totals \$10,818,309, while five HPRP 'entitlement communities' (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Waterbury) received the balance of funding from HUD.

On May 29, 2009, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced the State of Connecticut's plan for this federal stimulus initiative. The Governor stated: "The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program is a vital safety net for families and individuals in need. In these economic times, it is even more essential. Like many safety net programs over the past several months, this one is experiencing an increase in people asking for help and these federal funds will keep a roof over their heads." Noting that a similar homelessness prevention program served over 200 people last year, the Governor said the infusion of federal dollars will allow the initiative to help more than 1,000 people a year over the life of the stimulus grant, which must be spent within three years.

Governor Rell authorized the Department of Social Services (DSS) to contract program services through competitive bidding, and a request for proposals was issued on May 28, 2009. HPRP funds are to provide financial assistance and services to prevent individual and families from becoming homeless, or to re-house/stabilize those who have become homeless. Connecticut took this one-time funding opportunity and is attempting to utilize HPRP to address the homeless families and individuals who are turning to emergency shelter system that is reaching near capacity. With HPRP, Connecticut has an opportunity to create lasting change by implementing a housing-based, not a shelter-based, intervention for those families and individuals facing housing crisis.

CT'S HPRP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Funds for CT HPRP are administered through the Department of Social Services for six regional programs selected for funding after the competitive procurement. The Lead HPRP Regional providers and their respective catchment areas are as follows:

- ❖ **CTE, Inc. (Region 1 – Southwest)** – Bridgeport, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Greenwich, Monroe, New Cannan, Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford, Trumbull, Weston, Westport and Wilton

- ❖ **Columbus House, Inc. (Region 2 – Southcentral South)** – Greater New Haven Valley: Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Hamden, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven and Woodbridge

- ❖ **Mercy Housing & Shelter Corp., Inc. (Region 2 – Southcentral North)** – Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Guildford, Haddam, Killingworth, Madison, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook, Lyme, Old Lyme, Meriden and Wallingford.
- ❖ **Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (Region 3 – East)** – Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, East Lyme, Eastford, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Mansfield, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Waterford, Willington, Windham and Woodstock
- ❖ **Journey Home, Inc. (Region 4 – Northcentral)** – Andover, Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bolton, Bristol, Burlington, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Plymouth, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Southington, Stafford, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor and Windsor Locks
- ❖ **New Opportunities, Inc. (Region 5 – Northwest)** – Barkhamsted, Beacon Falls, Bethel, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Canaan, Cheshire, Colebrook, Cornwall, Danbury, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, Naugatuck, New Fairfield, New Hartford, New Milford, Newtown, Norfolk, North Canaan, Oxford, Prospect, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Sherman, Southbury, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Waterbury, Watertown, Winchester, Wolcott, and Woodbury.

All HPRP regional providers will be operational starting October 1, 2009. All HPRP providers and their applicable subcontractors shall provide HPRP financial assistance and services, as identified below in HPRP basics.

DSS and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) are working closely with the 5 HPRP entitlement communities (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Waterbury) to ensure a seamless service delivery model. For example, all (HPRP Lead Agencies and identified HPRP municipal entities) will receive referrals from United Way of CT / 2-1-1; attend CTHPRP 101 training conducted by CCEH, and quarterly roundtable discussions are planned to support training and implementation on a statewide basis. Also, in addition to community representatives, the HPRP municipal entities are members of the HPRP Steering Committee that is co-chaired by Pamela Giannini of DSS and Charles Pillsbury of Community Mediation. To obtain membership information about the HPRP Steering Committee, please go to www.cceh.org/pdf/esg/esg_committee.pdf.

It is the Department's expectation that a meeting will be convened between DSS, CCEH, HPRP municipal representatives and the local HUD office to develop a process to ensure constant communication between all parties to facilitate a seamless service delivery model and best practices.

HPRP BASICS

The program provides funding to assist both families and individuals who are at imminent risk of homelessness, or who are literally homeless. Examples of assistance provided include:

Financial Assistance

- ❖ Temporary rental assistance for a maximum of 18 months, including shallow (partial) subsidies, declining subsidies, and subsidies deeper than Section 8 subsidies
- ❖ Up to 6 months of back rent, which counts against the 18 month maximum
- ❖ Security and utility deposits
- ❖ Up to 18 months of utility payments, including up to 6 months of back utility payments
- ❖ Moving cost assistance (not furnishings)
- ❖ Motel and hotel vouchers up to 30 days

Services

- ❖ Outreach and engagement
- ❖ Housing search and placement services, such as tenant counseling, representative payee services with respect to housing costs, and mediation and outreach to landlords
- ❖ Case management services
- ❖ Service coordination
- ❖ Legal services to help people stay in their housing (not assistance with mortgages)
- ❖ Credit repair, including money management and resolving personal credit issues

Target Population

CT's HPRP program will serve individuals or families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Programs will target prevention to those who would be homeless "*but for this assistance,*" and rapidly re-house and stabilize families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness. Examples of risk criteria may include:

- ❖ Eviction within 2 weeks from a private dwelling (including housing provided by family or friends)
- ❖ Discharge within 2 weeks from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 180 days (including prisons, mental health institutions, and hospitals)
- ❖ Residency in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer meant for human habitation
- ❖ Sudden and significant loss of income
- ❖ Sudden and significant increase in utility costs
- ❖ Severe housing cost burden (greater than 50 percent of income for housing costs)
- ❖ Homeless in last 12 months
- ❖ Young head of household (under 25 with children or pregnant)
- ❖ Current or past involvement with child welfare, including foster care
- ❖ Extremely low income (less than 30 percent of Area Median Income)

- ❖ High overcrowding (the number of persons exceeds health and/or safety standards for the housing unit size)
- ❖ Credit problems that preclude obtaining of housing

United Way's 2-1-1 Role and CTHPRP:

United Way's 2-1-1 will provide eligibility screening and referral to all of CT HPRP's programs. A portion of the DSS HPRP funds have been allocated to United Way to establish a new Homeless/Housing Plus Unit. The trained Homeless/Housing Plus specialists will screen for potential eligibility and connect eligible callers directly to the HPRP program in their area, as well as enter basic information about eligible callers into the CT Homeless Management Information System (CT HMIS). For callers who are not eligible for HPRP services, based upon the pre-screen tool, the callers will be referred to other appropriate services. This new effort will create an "universal front door" for individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness to quickly and accurately be assessed for connection to HPRP. The Lead Regional Providers will determine eligibility. Also, each Lead Regional Provider will also accept applications for services if clients choose not to use the 2-1-1 window. The 2-1-1 access window is advantageous because if people are eligible for services, they can be referred to other services that 2-1-1 is aware of.

CT Coalition to End Homelessness Role and CT HPRP

CCEH, CT's statewide homeless coalition is providing training and technical assistance for HPRP providers, as well as CTHMIS training for HPRP and data analysis. As part of the National Alliance to End Homelessness' HPRP Technical Assistance Network, CCEH will have access to tools and best practices from around the country and be part of national workgroups on effective HPRP implementation. CCEH is continuing to develop an HPRP toolkit, which can also be accessed at www.cceh.org/hprp.htm.

For more information, please contact:

- 2-1-1 to access services
- David.dearborn@ct.gov and Kathleen.kabara@ct.gov for program/background information

