



# AHCCCS HOUSING PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

FIRST EDITION, PUBLISHED JULY 2022



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## PURPOSE

### AHCCCS HOUSING PROGRAM (AHP) MISSION

To provide safe, high quality, economically, and programmatically sustainable housing with individualized support services to ensure stable housing for all eligible members as a foundation to improve their physical and behavioral health outcomes, well-being, and self-determination.

### PURPOSE OF THE AHP GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of this AHP Guidebook (“Guidebook”) is to define, inform, and clarify key programmatic and operational processes for AHPs. It serves to define roles and provide guidance for the AHCCCS Housing Administrator, health care providers, community partners, and Contractors for service coordination and collaboration. This guidebook covers PSH and related programs funded through state (Non TXIX/XXI Medicaid) funding. AHP and the services described herein do **not** include or cover any licensed behavioral health residential or other long term care facilities, grant funded housing programs, or housing funds provided directly to the TRBHAs. The policies and standards specified in this Guide apply only to the Arizona State funding sources as specified in this Guide. Grant related housing funding standards are guided by, and subject to, eligibility standards and processes included in the respective grant agreements and AMPM Policy 320-T1.

This Guidebook will:

1. Focus on the individualized needs and choice of program members where possible,
2. Establish consistency, uniformity, and accountability,
3. Assist all stakeholders in understanding and meeting their AHP duties, expectations, and obligations,
4. Consistently improve quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of AHP housing and services for program members,
5. Provide clarity and transparency in AHP operations and services,
6. Promote and support effective permanent supportive housing (PSH) practices including supportive service delivery (i.e., wraparound services) and integration of services and housing subsidies, and
7. Comply with, be informed by, and incorporate:
  - a. Mandatory Federal, State, and local Housing Laws and Standards including requirements related to AHP Non-Title XIX/XXI funding sources and the Arizona Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (ARLTA),
  - b. HUD and Public Housing Authority (PHA) standard practices and guidance established for Public Housing, Continuum of Care, or other Federal Housing programs,
  - c. AHCCCS regulations and policies including the AHCCCS Contractor Operations Manual (ACOM) and AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual (AMPM), and this Guidebook,
  - d. Terms of AHCCCS/Contractor Contracts for Title XIX/XXI and Non-Title XIX/XXI services,
  - e. Evidence-based innovative housing and supportive service practices and standards, and
  - f. Feedback from stakeholders.

AHP’s policies and procedures including this Guidebook are collaborative and are regularly updated and improved upon with input from stakeholders including but not limited to inter-agency AHCCCS departments, the AHCCCS-contracted Housing Administrator, Contractors and their providers, Members, and other community partners, advocates, peers, and family members.

This Guidebook is limited to operations of the AHP and does not supersede the authority of applicable federal or State statutes, administrative code, AHCCCS policies, or the Contractors' Contract requirements under AHCCCS. While this Guidebook provides suggestions to behavioral health and other service providers on ways to expedite and integrate services in housing, this Guidebook is not intended to govern the delivery of any service under Medicaid or AHCCCS funded programs. This Guidebook is intended to comply with all applicable federal, state, and AHCCCS policies, regulations, and contractual requirements, but if this Guidebook is in conflict with or inconsistent, those authorities prevail over this Guidebook.

Note, some AHP processes will utilize the standard procedures or protocols developed and maintained by the AHCCCS-Contracted Housing Administrator or its sub-contractor and are identified in this Guidebook.

### **OVERVIEW/INTRODUCTION**

Founded in 1982, the AHCCCS is Arizona's Medicaid program, a Federal health care program jointly funded by the Federal and State governments for members and families who qualify based on income level. Built on a system of competition and choice, AHCCCS is a program that operates under an integrated managed care model, through a Demonstration Waiver under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. Contractors and Fee for Service (FFS) providers coordinate and pay for physical and behavioral health care services.

Beginning in 1987, as part of the *Arnold v. Sarn* verdict, the State of Arizona was required to provide Permanent Supportive Housing for individuals with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation who reside in Maricopa County. As a result, the State of Arizona provided funding to acquire and provide housing via the Arizona Department Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS). In 2014, *Arnold v. Sarn* was settled and AHCCCS entered a Stipulation for Providing Community Services and Terminating the Litigation (Stipulation). This requires the ongoing provision of certain supportive housing services for SMI members in Maricopa County. In 2016, the DBHS was statutorily transitioned from ADHS to AHCCCS and, as a result, physical and behavioral health services were integrated in Arizona. Today AHCCCS provides almost 2,800 units of scattered and site-based housing throughout Arizona.

Through its 30-year history of providing housing, AHCCCS recognizes the importance of housing as health care in addressing the physical and behavioral health of its most vulnerable members. AHCCCS understands the critical role of housing in improving member health outcomes. Funding for housing is primarily provided for individuals who have an SMI designation, including individuals participating in programs through the Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities (DES/DDD), Arizona Long Term Care System-Elderly and Physically Disabled (ALTCES-EPD), a Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authority (TRBHA), American Indian Health Plan (AIHP), and AHCCCS Complete Care-Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (ACC-RBHAs). However, there are also limited funds available for members with General Mental Health and/or Substance Use (GMHSU).

AHP endorses a Housing First approach to prioritize providing PSH, reduce procedural and programmatic barriers to housing, and the primacy of housing in treating an individual's physical, and behavioral health needs. PSH and Housing First require behavioral health services, including pre tenancy and tenancy wrap around supportive services, for members approved or selected for housing are primarily provided through Medicaid reimbursable services provided through the ACC, ACC-RBHA, ALTCES-EPD, and DES/DDD Contractors, fee for service programs and/or other AHCCCS providers.

## FUNDING

AHPs are funded by Non-Title XIX/XXI State Funds including the SMI Housing Trust Fund (A.R.S. § 41-3955.01), Supported Housing General Fund, and Non-Title XIX/XI SMI General Fund. Refer to AMPM Policy 320-T2 for more information on Non-Title XIX/XXI Funding Sources. AHP funding shall not be used for room and board charges in residential treatment settings. Key AHP housing supports for eligible members include rent subsidies (e.g., long-term subsidies as well as short-term bridge and eviction prevention rental assistance), utility assistance, payment of deposits, and move in assistance (not to include furniture).

1. Eviction Prevention and Housing Support Activities – AHP funding can provide limited support for other housing related expenses beyond Permanent Supportive Housing rental subsidies. Key activities may include emergency rent assistance or eviction prevention, housing move in kits (not to include furniture), reimbursement to landlords for member caused damages, landlord recruitment efforts, and move in and/or utility deposits.
2. Scattered Site Program – AHP funds utilized to provide housing subsidy vouchers to allow members to identify and lease housing in the community. The program serves individuals with an SMI determination as well as GMHSU members.
3. Community Living Program – AHP funds used to provide rental subsidies in fixed site or group/block leased units. This includes properties/units are purchased or developed with AHCCCS SMI Housing Trust Funds which may be under deed restrictions to house individuals with an SMI designation. This includes some specific units dedicated to members also participating in intensive service programs (e.g., Assertive Community Treatment [ACT]).
4. Special Projects – Through partnerships, AHCCCS provides operational support and/or administrative funding to support HUD’s Continuum of Care, Public Housing Authority partnerships, or other housing programs that are dedicated to serving individuals with an SMI designation and receiving services through the ACC-RBHA.

In addition to housing subsidy and support programs, through SMI Housing Trust Fund (SMI HTF), AHCCCS has funds to acquire or rehabilitate housing to support AHP eligible members with an SMI designation. SMI HTF funds may also be used for administrative support for AHP and to support PSH subsidies or housing activities by means of a legislative request and approval.

## PROGRAM GOALS

AHPs encompass the following goals in providing safe, stable, high-quality housing and supportive services:

### 1. SERVICE INTEGRATION

The effectiveness of housing in improving physical and behavioral health outcomes is directly related to the quality, capacity, and integration of support services to create and maintain housing stability. AHP’s aim is to integrate the member’s physical and behavioral health and natural supports into all housing projects as appropriate and with appropriate approval from the AHP member. While services are always voluntary on the part of the individual or member, providers and AHP staff continuously identify strategies to engage members in individualized services that meet the member’s self-identified and self-directed needs and goals.

## 2. IMPROVING MEMBER EXPERIENCE AND CARE

All individuals participating in AHP shall be treated with dignity and respect. All AHP members shall receive excellent customer service and assistance through every step in qualifying for, securing, maintaining housing and other AHP supports. Housing and integrated services shall recognize member choice, minimize trauma, and promote member's placement in the least restrictive setting possible. Housing programs shall seek to reduce administrative or other procedural barriers to housing. Program applicants or members shall be given adequate and timely information about their status in the AHP, available services, and/or requirements.

## 3. MAXIMIZE UTILIZATION AND RESOURCES

State funded housing and services are a limited and precious asset. AHCCCS and its partners shall be competent stewards and fiduciaries of AHP funds and resources on behalf of the State and the individuals served. AHP strive to serve as many people as possible within budgetary and programmatic limits. Since housing resources are limited, AHP prioritize housing for members with the greatest need and for whom it will have greatest impact. Housing shall be available in all Geographic Service Areas (GSAs) of Arizona. AHP will utilize quantitative and qualitative data to improve services and member outcomes. AHCCCS collaborates and partners with community and mainstream resources to leverage funds and maximize housing options for members.

## 4. PROGRAMMATIC AND OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Administrative, fiscal, and programmatic infrastructure, reporting, and monitoring is necessary to ensure that housing programs are legally compliant and cost effective while maximizing limited fiscal resources to achieve optimal programmatic standards and service outcomes. Policies and procedures shall be standardized to promote consistency and transparency for all stakeholders. To ensure administrative, fiscal, and programmatic accountability, AHCCCS will maintain documentation of all housing inventory, expenditures, and program members.

### SAMHSA PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

AHPs provide permanent supportive housing and have adopted and where possible implement the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) model for permanent supportive housing programs. (<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4509>) including the integration of voluntary, individualized supportive services to assist the member in attaining and maintaining housing as part of addressing the individual's service plan or other goals. The 12 Key Elements of the SAMHSA Permanent Supportive Housing Program are:

1. Tenants have a lease in their name, and, therefore, they have full rights of tenancy under landlord-tenant law, including control over living space and protection against unlawful eviction,
2. Leases do not have any provisions that would not be found in leases held by someone who does not have a psychiatric disability,
3. Participation in services is voluntary and tenants cannot be evicted for rejecting or being non-compliant with services,
4. Program or housing rules, if any, are similar to those found in housing for people who do not have psychiatric disabilities and do not restrict visitors or otherwise interfere with a life in the community,
5. Housing is not time-limited, and the lease is renewable at tenants' and owners' option,
6. Before moving into Permanent Supportive Housing, tenants are asked about their housing preferences and are offered the same range of choices as are available to others at their

- income level in the same housing market,
7. Housing is affordable, with tenants paying no more than 30 percent of their adjusted income (if any) toward rent and utilities, with the balance available for discretionary spending,
  8. Housing is integrated. Tenants have the opportunity to interact with neighbors who do not have psychiatric disabilities,
  9. Tenants have choices in the support services that they receive. Tenants are asked about their choices and can choose from a range of services, and different tenants receive different types of services based on their needs and preferences,
  10. As needs change over time, tenants can receive more intensive or less intensive support services without losing their homes,
  11. Support services promote recovery and are designed to help tenants choose, get, and keep housing, and
  12. The provision of housing and the provision of support services are distinct.

## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE/DUTIES AND ROLES

AHP involves five entities: AHCCCS; the health plans, and their provider networks; the AHCCCS Housing Administrator; Scattered Sites property owners and CLP property owners and operators; and AHCCCS Members. AHP success involves the coordination and alignment of each of these entities performing their functions in support of the member. This section describes the general duties of each of these components and how they are integrated.

### AHCCCS HOUSING DUTIES

Within AHP, AHCCCS' primary role is as the primary fiduciary receiving and allocating State Non-Title XIX/XXI SMI General and Supportive Housing funding and establishing overall programmatic and operational standards. As the primary fiduciary, AHCCCS will:

1. Ensure programmatic accountability by developing policies, legal agreements, program requirements and standards, guidebooks, notices, deliverables, a housing inventory, and other documentation necessary to ensure compliance with housing program obligations set forth in applicable state statutes or administrative regulations,
2. Inform the legislature and executive branch of AHCCCS member housing needs, program performance, and progress towards legislative and AHCCCS goals,
3. Establish overall AHP program standards and policies,
4. Contract with, allocate funds for and oversee the AHCCCS Housing Administrator,
5. Provide technical assistance to health plans on interpreting and applying program requirements,
6. Ensure coordination, for permanent supportive housing and supportive housing services, between all stakeholders in AHCCCS housing network including health plans, clinical services, housing administrators, and members, and
7. Monitor health plan compliance with supportive housing program requirements.

### AHCCCS GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

Within AHCCCS, AHP is managed by the Director of Housing Programs within the Division of Health Care Management. AHCCCS will maintain the following governance checks and balances:

1. To ensure multi-disciplinary integration and involvement of program areas impacted by AHP, the Director of Housing Programs will establish an internal Housing Work Group who will review AHCCCS and AHP policies related to housing, assist in service coordination issues, and provide additional oversight,
2. All AHCCCS Housing policies will be reviewed and approved by the AHCCCS Policy Committee, be subject to a public comment period, with general expectations and requirements of the AHP program,
3. AHCCCS will oversee AHP Housing Administrator contract using tools and processes described in the Housing Administrator's contract to ensure performance and compliance,
4. The Director of Housing Programs will hold regular coordination meetings with health plan Housing Specialists and the Housing Administrator,
5. AHCCCS and the Director of Housing Programs will create, monitor, and participate in processes to gather program member and advocate feedback including grievance processes, public meetings, or other tools (e.g., client satisfaction surveys), and
6. AHCCCS will maintain master inventory of units including addresses and supporting documentation (e.g., CC&Rs filed against property, Project Based Voucher Agreements) related to CLP and other units restricted for persons with an SMI designation.



**HEALTH PLAN DUTIES**

Housing is a critical social risk factor of health and should be a core consideration of a person's service plan or behavioral health care. For persons with behavioral health needs, health plans and their providers are responsible for assessing and addressing housing needs as part of the provision of individualized service planning, service delivery and care coordination. This also may include identification of least restrictive community settings as required under law. AHP provides housing resources to meet these objectives. In coordinating services and housing options, AHCCCS expects entities managing or providing behavioral health services to coordinate with AHP. This requirement includes health plan administrators and their provider networks as well as non-managed care entities coordinating mental health services such as Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (TRBHAs), American Indian Health Programs (AIHP) and their providers. The primary role of the health plan is to coordinate with the Housing Administrator to support eligible members in attaining and maintaining housing. Detailed duties of health plans and their providers related to housing is included in AHCCCS Contractor Operations Manual Policy 448 – Housing and in contracts for each applicable line of business.

**HEALTH PLAN GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT**

1. Health plans and registered providers are required to comply with all AHCCCS contract and policy requirements related to AHP and service provision,
2. Health plan contracts require on-staff Housing Specialists to coordinate with AHCCCS and the Housing Administrator around coordination issues, and
3. Participation in AHP meetings with AHCCCS Housing staff and Housing Administrator to assist in program development.

**PROVIDER/CARE TEAM DUTIES AND SERVICE COORDINATION**

The health plans and their providers with whom the member is enrolled are responsible for the provision of Title XIX/XXI wrap-around services to ensure housing stability necessary to achieve service plan goals related to independent living. The health plan and its providers are required to maintain ongoing communication with their members who need, who qualify for, and who are currently receiving supported housing services (rent/utility subsidies and relocation services) to ensure adequate coordination of care for these members. They shall have policies in place outlining coordination of care processes for these members, including procedures for collaboration with the AHP Housing Administrator. Providers shall identify members with housing needs and develop a monitoring process to support transition or post-transition to housing activities including, but not limited to, requests and referrals, transition wait times, transition barriers and special needs, rent amount, monthly income amounts, location of housing options chosen, and counties chosen for transition.

For the purposes of this document, the clinical provider/health home together with the housing related supportive services provider are the member's care team. The care team and housing administrator will work jointly to assist the member throughout the housing process and tenancy. Housing stability services provided by the care team may include the following depending on the needs of the member:

- Assessing the member's housing needs and AHP eligibility and provide appropriate applications to the Housing Administrator,
- Assist individuals with housing eligibility documentation. While ID, birth certificate or Social Security Cards may not be necessary for housing applications, health plan provider network will assist members in obtaining necessary documentation typically needed to sign a lease including but not limited to identification, Social Security numbers or cards, or proof of income,

- Identifying independent living, housing stability goals, and providing members information about local resources which may help the member to obtain, and maintain, housing in an independent community setting (e.g., rehabilitation and support services). The goals and services should be member focused and individualized and frequency of contact should be based upon the member's identified need,
- Ensure that member referred to AHP Housing Administrator is present at housing orientation/intake, with necessary transportation, along with their assigned case manager and/or other appropriate staff member,
- Provide housing supportive service referral for consenting members prior to housing orientation/intake. These supportive services shall follow SAMHSA PSH best practice,
  - Ability to provide transportation during housing search process,
  - Ability to provide move-in support which may include, support at lease signing, furniture, referral, food box, information on local community resources,
  - Ability to assist member with completing annual re-certifications,
  - Ability to provide home visits based on ISP,
- Include housing assistance and housing based supportive services in the member's individual service plan or care plan, and other required documents, to allow for reimbursement of eligible services provided,
- Assist members with securing adequate income including eligible mainstream benefits or employment to improve economic security,
- Assist member with opportunities for socialization, vocation, recreation, community integration and participation to assist member to develop natural supports to assist in housing stability,
- Connect member to resources to address member's barriers to housing stability (e.g.: substance abuse treatment, health care, income, education),
- Assist member with developing a personal crisis plan including emergency contacts and community resources,
- Assistance with acquisition or training in independent living life skills such as personal hygiene, cleaning and maintenance of housing, budgeting, and personal finance,
- With member's consent, secure releases of information to allow coordination and communication with the AHP Housing Administrator, mainstream programs, or other community-based resources to assist member secure appropriate care and resources,
- Intervention and coordination with the member, AHP Housing Administrator, landlords, member, and the member's advocates, peers, or other identified parties of interest (with the member's consent) to address issues which may compromise housing stability or lease compliance
  - Timely communication with AHP Housing Administrator upon notice of tenancy issues,
  - Ability to provide home visits to assist member in resolving tenancy issues or behavior concerns,
  - Ability to attend housing related staffing with AHP Housing Administrator to avoid eviction for members at risk of losing housing, establish plans around re-housing members due to loss of tenancy, or regarding any other significant tenancy issues,
- In the event of a change in member's personal situation or health needs, eviction or other threat to the tenancy or other event that may result in housing instability, the provider shall work with the AHP Housing Administrator, the member, and other resources to identify an alternative housing or setting as quickly as possible that addresses the situation and improves housing

stability. This may include relocation, increase, or decrease of services, finding legal assistance or mitigating the legal consequences of a tenancy termination (e.g., advocating for mutual rescission over eviction, maintaining voucher/subsidy through relocation, identification of alternative housing subsidy sources), and

- AHCCCS health plans and providers are encouraged to participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. The HMIS is used to coordinate care, manage program operations, and better serve clients.

### **COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAM (CLP) OWNERS AND OPERATORS' DUTIES (INCLUDING MASTER LESSEES)**

CLP properties are those purchased by providers with State SMI Housing Trust Funds and under CC&Rs or other use restrictions to serve persons with an SMI designation. CLP property owners will ensure appropriate management/administration of CLP properties as guided by the AHP Administrator. CLP Operators will:

- Provide safe, clean, and maintained units that meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS) requirements,
- Execute Lease(s) and/or occupancy agreements with prospective tenants referred by Housing Administrator,
- Accept applications from members for occupancy with limited or no screening criteria and in compliance with any Lease terms or conditions,
- Execute Occupancy Agreement or sub-leases with all tenants occupying units under the Lease,
- Coordinate and oversee requests for maintenance ensuring timely completion of maintenance requests, including routine maintenance,
- Process notices and evictions of tenants in compliance with the ARLTA and other legal requirements,
- Collect and receipt monthly tenant rent,
- Operate in full compliance with Fair Housing Law, ARLTA, and all other Federal, state, or local laws,
- Follow Housing First principals in operation of the housing,
- Notify Housing Administrator of any issues that jeopardize tenants' housing stability,
- Provide copies of any legal notices issued to tenants, to Housing Administrator,
- Request authorization for eviction of tenants, and
- Provide notification of any upcoming vacancies under the Lease.

### **SCATTERED SITE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND OWNERS' DUTIES**

Private sector housing owners, landlords, property managers, or other entities leasing to AHP members must, in accordance with Arizona Landlord Tenant Law and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract:

- Provide safe, clean, and maintained units that meet HQS requirements,
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract, executed with the Housing Administrator,
- Comply will all terms of lease executed with AHP program member,
- Notify Housing Administrator of any legal notices or issues affecting member's tenancy or housing stability,

- Provide all necessary financial documentation related to AHP lease or other payments,
- Operate in full compliance with Fair Housing Law, ARLTA, and all other Federal, state, or local laws including:
  - Process notices and evictions of tenants in compliance with the ARLTA and other legal requirements,
  - Collect and receipt monthly tenant rent,
- Providing appropriate legal notices regarding potential changes to lease, tenancy, or occupancy (e.g., evictions, terminations, renewals) Not discriminate against AHP members.

### **AHP MEMBER OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES**

AHP member's primary requirement is to attain and maintain housing, regardless of if they participate in supportive services. AHP is a voluntary program and members may elect to opt out of the program or its processes at any time. Failure to follow AHP or other legal requirements related to attaining and maintaining housing may result in a termination of an AHP housing placement (e.g., eviction) and/or a loss of AHP housing subsidy. Opting out of or loss of AHP housing placement or subsidies does not impact an individual's behavioral health, physical healthcare, or other supportive services through a health plan or its providers (including Fee for Service providers). Key obligations for actively housed AHP members include:

- Provide true and accurate documentation to the housing administrator upon request,
- Abide by lease requirements of the occupied unit,
- Abide by tenant obligations under Arizona Residential Landlord Tenant Act, and
- Report the following changes to the housing administrator,
  - Household composition,
  - Income, and
  - Tenancy Concerns.

### **AHCCCS HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES**

The key duties of the AHP Administrator are established in the Contractor's Scope of Work and related documentation including this Guidebook. Key duties include:

- Perform all Housing Administrator duties described in Contractor Scope of Work and clarified in Guidebook and other related documentation,
- Conduct financial oversight and programmatic monitoring to ensure the AHP is operated within its budget parameters, that all funds are appropriately expended and recorded, and that all AHP financial obligations are paid in a timely manner,
- Maintain and publish operating procedures, forms, and documentation necessary to provide Housing Administration services consistent with AHP policies and Guidebook,
- Maintain system processes for the submission of housing applications, waitlist management (including prioritization) and referrals for housing opportunities,
- Assist AHCCCS Housing staff maintain inventory of Community Living Program, Project Based Voucher or other units contractually or otherwise restricted to serve persons determined SMI under AHP.
- Coordinate and facilitate a variety of training programs for stakeholder groups,
- Coordinate with health plans and Fee for Service providers to complete AHP processes including eligibility criteria that requires provider referrals and verification of SMI determination or mental health category and housing needs,
- Maintain processes for feedback management to inform program policy,

- Conduct landlord engagement and maintain relationships with landlords, property managers and owners to ensure adequate supply of housing options for AHP members,
- Ensure operation of housing within Housing First and SAMHSA Permanent Supportive Housing Standards,
- Ensure that owners and members comply with legal housing standards,
- Provide members and owners with prompt, professional service,
- Comply with all fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, AHCCCS regulations, handbooks and requirements and other applicable federal, state, and local laws to ensure AHP housing and services are accessible and available to all potential members,
- Gather and provide fiscal and programmatic reporting on AHCCCS housing programs, and
- Ensure appropriate fingerprint clearance is completed for staff interacting with AHCCCS members.

### **HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT**

The AHCCCS Housing Administrator's duties and oversight are established in the Contractor's Scope of Work and related documentation including AHCCCS policies and this Guidebook. The following oversight will be utilized to ensure excellent performance of all Housing Administrator duties:

- The Housing Administrator Contract Scope of Work describes all work plans and processes the Housing Administrator must submit to AHCCCS describing specifically how they will implement and oversee all contractual duties as well as required communication and reporting and
- As noted above, AHCCCS will convene meetings with AHCCCS, the Housing Administrator and the health plan Housing Specialists to share feedback and discuss AHP operations and improvements.

AHCCCS will perform AHP Housing Administrator monitoring as described in ACOM 448 and this Guidebook.

### **AHP HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MODEL**

As the AHCCCS AHP Housing Administrator, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation (ABC) and its subcontractor HOM maintain a partnership model for the performance of rental assistance administration and related housing program operations. This model leverages the two organizations' unique and complementary expertise and capabilities to provide administration and operation of housing programs. As the Contractor to AHCCCS, ABC performs systems level administration including financial management, planning, coordination, convening and facilitating, policy development, training, performance management and advocacy. ABC's Sub-Contractor, HOM, Inc. performs direct housing services including briefings, voucher issuance, housing search assistance, approval of assisted tenancies, rent reasonableness, Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, subsidy calculations, execution of Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts, payment of HAP to landlords, and interim and annual recertifications.

The delineation of duties in this relationship relates directly to the following sections of this Guidebook. In summary, for coordination and communication purposes, ABC is the main point of contact for activities regarding eligibility, applications, waitlist management and selection, program terminations, and grievances and appeals. HOM, Inc. is the main point of contact for other housing functions as noted in the figure above. Understanding this separation of duties is key for ongoing coordination and communication with AHP stakeholders.



ARIZONA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CORPORATION

**SYSTEMS LEVEL ADMINISTRATION**

- System Collaboration
- AHP Plan Development and Implementation
- AHCCCS & MCO Interface
- Referral and Wait List Management
- HMIS
- Hearings, Grievances and Appeals
- Eligibility Determinations
- Policy Development
- Training
- Data Analysis and Visualization
- Performance Management
- Evaluation
- Stakeholder Feedback Management
- Financial Management
- Messaging and Outreach
- Advocacy



**DIRECT SERVICE**

- Program Briefing
- Issue and Manage Vouchers
- Housing Search Assistance
- Landlord Engagement
- Tenant Rent Calculations
- Housing Assistance Payments to Landlords
- Member Start-up Boxes
- Initial/Interim/Annual Recertifications
- Initial/Annual/Special HQS Inspections
- Coordination with Case Managers and Supportive Services Providers
- Move-Out Inspections
- Damage and Vacancy Loss
- Programs Terminations
- Eviction Prevention

## EVICITION PREVENTION AND MOVE IN ASSISTANCE

A portion of AHP funds is set aside each year to assist persons with an SMI designation or GMHSUD with one-time financial assistance to assist them in attaining or maintaining housing or to mitigate housing crises that could result in loss of housing or homelessness. Assistance can include payment of back rent, deposits or move in fees, or other one-time expenses. Funding is limited and may not be available at all times depending on requests and utilization. These funds are separate than deposit assistance, move in support and other programs offered to persons receiving AHP housing subsidy support.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible program applicants must meet ALL the following criteria with service provider verification. Awards are one-time per member, per year state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).

- The applicant household is at or below 80 percent Area Median Income,
- The applicant is at risk of eviction and/or homelessness, and
- The applicant is referred by their clinical team and has an SMI designation or GMHSU.

### ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Eviction Prevention or financial assistance may be used to cover the following expenses:

- Rental Arrears - AHP will pay up to two months rental arrears not to exceed \$3,000,
- Utility Arrears - AHP will pay up to two months utility arrears not to exceed \$1,000, and
- Move-in Assistance - AHP will pay move-in costs including required fees and deposits, security deposits, utility deposits, and first month's rent not to exceed \$3,000,
  - Move-in assistance is only available to non-subsidized members (any permanent housing assistance, including permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing, from programs like AHP, CoC, HCV, SSVF, etc.).

### APPLICATION PROCESSES

ABC will accept applications as long as funding is available. Available funding is not guaranteed.

An eviction prevention assistance application must be completed by the applicant and their clinical team. Once completed it may be submitted to [ahp-ep@hominc.com](mailto:ahp-ep@hominc.com). The following is a step-by-step guide to complete the application process.

Complete the assistance application and attach the following supporting documentation:

- Identification documentation.
  - State-issued ID (preferred document), or one of the following:
  - A birth certificate or delayed birth certificate issued in any state, territory, or possession of the United States,
  - A United States certificate of birth abroad,
  - A United States passport,
  - A foreign passport with a United States visa,
  - An I-94 form with a photograph,
  - A United States citizenship and immigration services employment authorization document or refugee travel document,
  - A United States certificate of naturalization,
  - A United States certificate of citizenship,
  - A tribal certificate of Indian blood, or
  - A tribal or bureau of Indian affairs affidavit of birth.

- Documentation based on need:
  - Eviction prevention (rental) - include copy of eviction notice with application,
  - Utility shut-off (utility) - include copy of disconnect notice with application,
  - Move-in assistance (rental security & utility deposits),
    - Copy of proposed lease,
    - Move-in cost sheet,
    - Verification from the utility company that clearly states the total deposit due,
    - Member current income verification,
      - Social Security Income (SSI, SSD, etc.),
      - Verification letter of Employment,
      - Last two pay stubs,
      - Other income verification.

Email the application and supporting documentation to [ahp-ep@hominc.com](mailto:ahp-ep@hominc.com). The Housing Administrator will confirm receipt of application within one (1) business day and provide a decision or request additional documentation within two (2) business days of application receipt. If approved, funds will be issued no later than five (5) business days from receipt, provided all payment information is received and confirmed.



## **ELIGIBILITY**

AHP eligibility requirements are threshold requirements and must be met prior to the member receiving AHP housing and benefits and to maintain AHP housing subsidies or benefits.

AHP program eligibility is primarily established by the terms and rules set by the Arizona State Legislature in the enacting legislation or budget allocation process that awarded the funds to AHCCCS. All AHP funds are required to serve persons with an SMI designation or with GMHSU, particularly those who have acute service needs including those identified as “high cost/high need” based upon their utilization of services and who are experiencing homelessness or other housing instability. Within these legal and legislative parameters, it is AHCCCS’ intent to minimize administrative barriers and qualifications for housing consistent with evidence-based Housing First standards so that AHP programs can serve persons with the greatest housing and service needs. AHP eligibility requirements describe here complies with legal standards, funding requirements, and policy priorities.

### **INITIAL ELIGIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the Housing Administrator to review and verify that all members referred to AHP housing meet the eligibility requirements at referral and prior to housing placement. While it is the applying member’s responsibility to establish eligibility and provide all required documentation, the member’s provider should confirm eligibility and provide initial eligibility documentation (with member’s appropriate releases) at the time of application and assist in verifying eligibility upon referral for AHP benefit or subsidy. Specific housing programs may have additional qualifications or priority populations that will be considered in referring or placing the individual in the programs.

### **RE-CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

As noted above, member’s eligibility should be documented at the time they are referred to the AHP program and eligibility must be verified prior to receiving AHP housing or supports. Additionally, members must remain eligible to continue to maintain their AHP housing. On an annual basis, AHP member’s eligibility status must be reviewed as part of housed member’s annual AHP housing re-examination by the Housing Administrator. The member must notify the Housing Administrator if there is a change in the member’s circumstance that may change the member’s eligibility status including increases or decreases of the family’s adjusted income, or changes in the household composition. Failure to report a change or misreport may lead to program termination. Changes in status resulting in AHP ineligibility may result in loss of AHP subsidy or services.

### **OTHER HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAMS**

AHCCCS and the AHP partner with other local Housing Authorities (Housing Choice Vouchers), homeless programs (Continuum of Care, Rapid Re-Housing Initiatives), and housing providers to coordinate referrals of SMI or GMHSU members and expand housing subsidies and options for members. These programs may have additional eligibility requirements related to their funding sources and programs.

### **AHP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The following requirements are mandatory eligibility requirements for participation in AHP. Additional specifications for each eligibility requirement are later in this section. The applicant/member shall:

1. Have an SMI designation or be determined Title XIX GMHSU by a qualified provider,
2. Be a United States citizen or have eligible immigrant status,
3. Be at least 18 years of age at the time of referral, and

4. Have an identified housing need documented by the member's clinical provider.

It should be noted that the following criteria are **NOT** considerations or eligibility requirements for AHP participation or subsidy:

- Poverty or Income Levels – Note: Income will be evaluated in determining AHP subsidy and calculation of tenant rent contribution,
- Criminal background, prior incarceration, or sex offender status,
- Prior rental history or evictions including history in AHP housing,
- Substance use diagnosis or substance abuse history,
- Medical or behavioral health condition or specific diagnosis,
- Participation, compliance or completion of treatment or programming,
- Employment or income status,
- Credit history or financial security, or
- Housing readiness based upon any of the above categories.

These criteria are only for the purposes of determining AHP eligibility for housing subsidy and assistance. Specific housing providers, landlords, or properties may require additional eligibility requirements as part of their leasing including those not used by AHP.

#### AHP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS BY CRITERIA

The legislative and budgetary approvals allocating Arizona State Non-Title XIX/XXI funding to AHCCCS and AHP require that members have an SMI designation and/or have a General Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse Disorder (GMHSU).

- a. **SMI AND GMHSU Eligibility is Related to Funding Source and AHCCCS Enrollment** - AHP funds consist of two distinct State of Arizona funding sources with specific behavioral health eligibility criteria as described below:
  - **SMI Housing General Fund** - All members must have an SMI designation. Medicaid/AHCCCS enrollment is not required as long as person has an SMI designation.
  - **Supported Housing General Fund** - All members must have an SMI designation or have a GMHSU condition AND GMHSU members must be AHCCCS eligible and maintain enrollment.

All AHP funds are appropriated/allocated through the State of Arizona and program eligibility is subject to any requirements or restrictions incorporated into the legislative funding or allocation process. The standards described here may be superseded or amended to reflect any subsequent legislative changes and are subject to available funding.

- b. **Determination of Eligible SMI or GMHSU Status** - SMI determination or identification of GMHSU member behavioral health needs will be assessed and determined by the health plans and their providers in accordance with medical and behavioral health standards, AHCCCS criteria and processes documented in Arizona State Law (I.e.; SMI determination process), Arizona behavioral health regulations, AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual policies and by contract. The Housing Administrator will not be involved in the determination process, only in securing verification or documentation from the health plan, providers,

or care teams for the purpose of housing coordination and eligibility. While SMI or GMHSU status is required for eligibility purposes due to limited resources housing waitlist and resources may be prioritized based on need or other priorities (i.e., High Need High Cost Members)

### **CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANT STATUS**

Under Arizona State Law, ARS 1-502, Any State agency that administers state or local public benefit, shall require, “each natural person who applies for the state or local public benefit to submit at least one of the following documents to the entity that administers the state or local public benefit demonstrating lawful presence in the United States.” ARS 1-502 also identifies acceptable documentation for demonstrating lawful presence in the United States. While a Social Security Card will not be required for AHP eligibility, it is highly recommended that the member secure a Social Security Card or documentation since it will be needed for other housing processes.

Members may have to provide additional documentation related to verification of identification and citizenship/lawful presence in the United States as part of their eligibility and enrollment process for Title XIX/XXI covered services required for some AHP housing programs.

### **MUST BE 18 YEARS OR OLDER**

Member applying for AHP housing must be at least 18 years old and legally able to enter into a binding lease or housing contract at the time of referral for AHP housing. A legally emancipated minor under the age of eighteen may qualify for AHP housing services or subsidy if they also meet the other AHP criteria including mental health status.

### **MUST HAVE IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEED**

It will be the responsibility of a qualified representative of a health plan or the member’s behavioral health provider or qualified representative of a PATH (Project for Assistance to Transition from Homelessness) homeless outreach team to assess and determine the member’s need for housing and subsequently provide an application to the AHP program (See Application Guidebook in Appendix A for further instruction and Appendix B for the AHP application form). The referring agency representatives’ signature on the AHP application is the attestation that the member has a verifiable housing need. “Housing need” may include the following conditions:

1. Actual Homelessness: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - a. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, and
  - b. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs).
2. Institutional or Hospital Discharge – an individual exiting or stepping down from an institution who is likely to be homeless (per Eligibility Criteria section), or who does not have a safe residence to go to upon discharge. An institution may include physical or behavioral health inpatient or residential facilities, emergency rooms or other short term crisis facilities, Arizona State Hospital (ASH), jails, prisons, or other criminal justice settings, or recently transition out of the Foster Care system. Institutional settings also include similar tribal settings or systems (e.g., tribal jails),
3. Other Identified Housing Crisis or Instability – a “housing need” may also be established by the presence of the following indicators:

- a. Fleeing domestic violence or other living situation that may result in physical harm or violence,
  - b. Living in a physical setting or living situation that may result in physical or behavioral health harm, illegality, violence or be otherwise inconsistent with member's service or treatment plan (i.e., overcrowding, COVID exposure), and/or
  - c. Frequent physical or behavioral health inpatient hospitalization or treatment or Emergency Department or emergency department visits (three or more visits in past 12 months).
4. Housing instability established and documented in at least one of the following indicators:
- d. Appropriate ICD-10 z code of "homelessness" or "housing instability" in medical record,
  - e. Housing need assessed and documented in the member's service plan. This may include assessments using an AHCCCS approved evidence-based tool that includes Housing assessment,
  - f. Housing is needed to "prevent disease, disability or other adverse conditions of progression, or to prolong life,"
  - g. Member self-attestation of homelessness, or housing insecurity,
  - h. In the past 12 months, three or more episodes of homelessness, evictions or housing instability as documented to Contractor by individuals or entity with direct knowledge of housing condition or situation including peers, Community Based Organizations (e.g., homeless providers, CoC, coordinated entry system, outreach teams)
  - i. AHP will not base housing eligibility criteria on the following:
    - i) Prior evictions or rental history,
    - ii) Income or Poverty level,
    - iii) Criminal Background,
    - iv) Substance Use Disorder including current substance abuse, use or prior history,
    - v) Specific behavioral or physical health Diagnoses, and/or
    - vi) Treatment Compliance or Program Participation.

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLDS**

AHCCCS Housing Programs may serve families. For purposes of eligibility, the head of household must meet the eligibility requirements described above. If the head of household is no longer eligible, the rest of the household would be considered ineligible unless another household member applied for the subsidy and qualified for AHP eligibility.

#### **ROLE OF HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY**

The Housing Administrator is not expected to have clinical medical or behavioral health expertise, licensing, or qualifications. Because key elements of AHP eligibility are (or may be) based upon clinical medical or behavioral health determinations, it is the responsibility of the health plan, provider, or treatment team qualified representatives to work with the member to establish AHP eligibility including collecting and submitting all necessary documentation to the Housing Administrator. In evaluating or verifying eligibility documentation, the Housing Administrator will review only for completeness and that it meets the document standards (e.g., signed and dated letters, supporting documents provided if needed), but will not question or deny eligibility based on adequacy or validity of medical or behavioral health diagnoses or qualified representative's professional determination of SMI and/or GMHSU High Cost/High Needs status or "medical need."

The Housing Administrator will not maintain or inquire about any information about the nature or extent of a person's disability including a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition.

#### **INCOMPLETE APPLICATION OR INELIGIBILITY FOR HOUSING REFERRAL**

The provider submitting an application for housing will be notified if the member is determined to be ineligible based on the criteria above. It is the submitting provider's responsibility to inform the member and find alternative housing solutions. Submitting providers are allowed the opportunity to correct any missing or incomplete applications. Submitting providers may request a hearing or review of the determination if deemed ineligible.

In the event it is determined that a member no longer has a "housing need" or other eligibility criteria, member may be removed from wait list or housing subsidy program subject to adequate notification. In the event the member is housed, adequate time will be provided to allow member, with assistance from their provider, to identify an alternative housing placement. Providers are requested to notify the Housing Administrator if a member is housed through other sources or no longer has a housing need so that the member may be removed from the AHP waitlist.

#### **DUTY OF MEMBER**

In establishing eligibility, the member and any entity or person assisting in the AHP housing application and eligibility determination process must provide true and accurate information which is complete to the best their ability. Applicants are prohibited from providing fraudulent or knowingly wrong information. Provision of fraudulent or knowingly wrong information may result in loss of AHP privileges or eligibility under the AHP.

#### **HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES**

The Housing Administrator shall:

- 1) Manage standard operating processes and procedures for submission, review and timely determination and validation of AHP applications,
- 2) Publicize and promote eligibility criteria with health plans, AHCCCS registered providers, members, community partners, advocates, and other relevant stakeholders,
- 3) Ensure all applicable Housing Administrator staff are trained and competent in administering eligibility verification processes,
- 4) Provide an accessible application form to health plans, providers, treatment teams or other qualified representatives or referring entities to apply to the AHP,
- 5) Notify ineligible member's behavioral health provider and allow for an informal appeals process.
- 6) Ensure that eligibility documentation is maintained in the files and/or electronic records for AHP members receiving subsidy or benefit and that records do not contain any medical or other legally prohibited information,
- 7) Ensure eligibility documentation requirements, submission processes, notifications and hearing processes comply with Fair Housing and ADA requirements related to accessibility and reasonable accommodations as well as being culturally appropriate, and
- 8) Provide a standard Release of Information (ROI) form to allow member's provider or care team to share member's protected information with the Housing Administrator including mental health status for the purposes of determining eligibility and coordination of supportive services in order to attain and maintain housing.

**SERVICE COORDINATION IN ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

Providers and/or the member's clinical provider are responsible for the assessment and documentation of housing need and key housing eligibility criteria including the member's mental health status or SMI determination which are required eligibility criteria to make a referral for AHP housing services. Providers and treatment teams should consider the following activities to assist members in demonstrating eligibility for AHP housing and programs:

1. Ensure that housing status and need is assessed and documented as part of establishing or modifying individual service plan in necessary.
2. Use "Z" codes as appropriate in ongoing service delivery for member to record ongoing housing need and/or homeless status.
3. Secure ROI from the member to share protected information for the purposes of housing referral and placement including eligibility determination.
4. Member always has right to refuse to sign a release of information. Provider should affirm member's right to refuse but inform member that not signing release may make it more difficult or take longer to secure AHP housing since it will be harder to coordinate with the Housing Administrator.
5. Ensure member meets AHP eligibility requirements prior to referral and if eligible include eligibility documentation with application.
6. Assist members in securing and safely retaining identification, social security numbers, and other essential documents necessary to document AHP eligibility and that will be needed to complete landlord housing applications.
7. Coordinate with Housing Administrator to receive notices and status reports on housing application process including any meetings, appeals, notices, status changes, eligibility determination changes to allow for advocacy and coordination of services and housing
8. Ensure member understands all processes, requirements and duties, and status related to the housing process and eligibility.
9. Be aware of AHP housing renewal or re-certification timelines to ensure member still has necessary eligibility status and documentation.
10. Ensure member notifies Housing Administrator of any changes to member's housing eligibility or member is informed of any clinical change in status of member's housing need. This includes removing applications from the waitlist if they are able to secure housing through another program or subsidy.
11. In assessing housing need, AHCCCS follows a Housing First approach. For purposes of "housing need," AHCCCS does not require any specific eligibility requirements related to "housing readiness" such as sobriety, income or financial security, or compliance with service plan directives or requirements. The assumption should be that the vast majority of members are "housing ready" regardless of any specific presenting issues or conditions as long as appropriate, client centered supportive services are wrapped into the housing placement. Consistent with this guidance, AHP housing should be focused on those individuals with the greatest service needs for whom housing will have the greatest impact.
12. Provide other supports for housing eligibility determination such as transportation to Social Security office or other location to secure documents or medical appointments to assess and determine housing need.
13. With appropriate release of information, communicate with third party medical or behavioral health providers, outreach teams, family members or peers, institutional providers; homeless shelters/service providers or entities with knowledge of the member's housing need and situation to determine homeless history or other "housing need" documentation. All assistance must be with the member's informed consent and in compliance with privacy and confidentiality laws.

**PRIVACY ACT REQUIREMENTS**

The collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of social security numbers (SSN), employer Identification numbers (EIN), any information derived from the AHP eligibility determination process must be conducted, to the extent applicable, in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and all other provisions of Federal, State, and local law.

Applicants and members, including all adults in the household, should sign a valid release of information. This form should incorporate the Federal Privacy Act and HIPAA requirements describing how the information collected may be used, whom it may be shared with, and under what conditions the provider and/or the Housing Administrator may release the information collected.

## APPLYING FOR AND SECURING HOUSING APPLICATIONS, WAIT LIST, TENANT SELECTION (REFERRALS), SEARCH, AND LEASE UP

This section covers the general policies, processes, and standards related to:

- Submitting housing applications for AHP on behalf of members,
- Wait list Processes including Prioritization and Selection/Referral Process,
- Issuing Vouchers and Housing Search Processes, and
- Housing Approval Processes,
  - Inspections,
  - Rent Reasonableness,
  - Determining Rent and Subsidy Amounts, and
  - Lease and Housing Assistance Payment Agreements (HAP).

It is the intent of the AHP program that all eligible members have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive housing assistance. To achieve this goal, AHP's application process should be open, simple, understandable, accessible, and treat applicants fairly and consistently. Per Fair Housing and other legal requirements, it should also be accessible to all persons, including those with disabilities. It is also an AHP goal to provide members as much choice as possible in their choice of least restrictive living settings.

While the application process should be open to all eligible members, the AHP has limited housing capacity based on available funding. Due to limited housing resources that are exceeded by the demand for housing, AHP will prioritize waitlists for housing vouchers and placements. Prioritization is based on several factors including member acuity or housing need, appropriateness of the housing opportunity with member need or specific project eligibility requirements, funding priorities or restrictions, and other State or AHCCCS policies. In applying prioritization standards, AHP will comply with all Fair Housing and other applicable standards. When housing voucher or placement becomes available, the Housing Administrator must select eligible households from the waiting list in accordance with AHCCCS stated requirements and priorities.

Finally, where possible, within policy standards, affordability and within the resources available, AHP will recognize member choice of housing setting and support type including but not limited to geographic location, housing type, household members, and/or unit or community amenities and resources.

No applicant has a right or entitlement to be listed on the waiting list, or to any particular position on the waiting list. An appeal process will be available to ensure priorities in selection are followed and applied appropriately.

### APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The AHP housing process will begin with the submission of an application from a member's provider to the Housing Administrator. The Housing Administrator will accept applications for consideration from the following qualified representatives:

1. AHCCCS Managed Care Organizations including ACC, ACC-RBHAs, and ALTCS in coordination with providers,
2. AHCCCS Managed Care Organization (MCO) contracted providers, including but not limited to, health homes, behavioral health providers, SMI clinics/BH health homes, and integrated clinics, and residential facilities,
3. American Indian Health Program providers for applicable Fee for Service members,
4. Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (TRBHAs),



5. Tribal ALTCS,
6. Indian Health Service facilities,
7. Tribally owned or operated 638 facilities, and/or
8. PATH Team.

AHP applications may be initiated by the provider upon request of the member or be initiated by the provider with the member's consent. Providers will work with the client to complete all required application information including member's choice of preferred housing options (e.g., housing type).

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Housing Administrator's application process secures the minimum amount of information necessary to identify member, establish AHP eligibility, and allows for follow up including ongoing communication and housing coordination. To accomplish this, the AHP application includes: (See Appendix A and B for current application form and process):

- Member name and identifying information (Social Security Number, Date of Birth),
- Basic demographics,
- Eligibility Information,
- Member preferences or program eligibility,
- Contact information for member,
- Application Date,
- Member Release of Information (if signed) to allow sharing of information between member, provider, and Housing Administrator,
- Identification of any specific housing programs or specialized settings the member may be programmatically eligible for (e.g., ACT Housing),
- Information on household size if there are additional household members,
- Signature and contact information of qualified provider staff member submitting the application, and
- The Housing Application and Referral Process are included under Appendix A and B.

The Housing Administrator will conduct regular trainings on the AHP application process for all referring providers and members. The Housing Administrator reviews all applications within three (3) business days for completeness. The Housing administrator will notify the referring provider that either the application was accepted and next steps of the process (e.g., wait list, selection), or that the application was incomplete. In the event of an incomplete application, the Housing Administrator will notify the provider who submitted the application and provide a description of deficiency. The provider will have the opportunity to correct or provide any missing information and resubmit the application. As noted under eligibility above, the Housing Administrator will only review applications for completeness and adequacy of documentation (signatures, required documents, etc.). The Housing Administrator will not review, or question member's behavioral health status or determinations of need or other provider determined eligibility criteria.

### **WAIT LISTS AND PRIORITIZATION**

Demand for AHCCCS housing units exceeds available housing resources, therefore AHP housing subsidies will be prioritized to reflect AHP and AHCCCS priorities including recognizing member choice, serving persons with the greatest acuity of need, matching available resources to member's individual need, or other policy priorities established by the Legislature as part of the AHP funding approval or AHCCCS. All AHP housing programs will prioritize the wait list of eligible applicants based on objective criteria to ensure

that housing opportunities are available in a fair and transparent manner to best address AHP defined priorities.

### **PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST**

All eligible applicants will be placed on a wait list for housing opportunities. The Housing Administrator maintains a waitlist for all GSAs and has the ability to match applicants to all specific vacancies for which they are eligible. The AHP waitlist is based upon housing need, therefore, the waitlist will not be closed or have limits of the number of persons on the list. Participation on other waitlists including those of local housing authorities or other mainstream programs will not affect placement on AHP waitlists. Waitlist status will also not be impacted by placement in temporary housing, institutional placement, or transitional housing.

Submitting behavioral health providers may inquire on the applicant's waitlist status. The Housing Administrator will confirm if the applicant is active or not active on the waitlist. Due to prioritization standards used to house the most vulnerable applicants, an average wait time will not be applicable to all members and therefore may not be provided. Behavioral health providers are encouraged to seek alternative housing solutions while member is on the AHP waitlist.

The applicant will remain on AHP wait lists until: 1) they secure AHP housing (see following sections); 2) they no longer have housing need; 3) they are securing other permanent housing (e.g., HUD or HCV voucher); they voluntarily remove themselves from waitlist; 4) the member and/or clinical team do not respond to housing administrator within 2 weeks on at least 2 occasions or; 5) member has failed to complete the orientation and intake process on three separate occasions. The provider should notify the Housing Administrator as soon as possible if the member's housing need or status has changed so they can be removed from the waitlist. The Housing Administrator will conduct a waitlist purge every two years to remove inactive applicants. The Housing Administrator will coordinate with health plans and Providers to establish continued housing need for members on the waitlist. Removal from the waitlist may be appealed using the grievance and appeals processed outlined in this guidebook.

### **PRIORITIZATION AND SELECTION**

When a vacancy is identified within an AHCCCS Housing program, the Housing Administrator will match the program requirements with a list of identified persons on the wait list who qualify for the vacancy. As noted above, a person may be eligible for more than one housing type or setting (i.e., CLP or scattered site). It is the responsibility of the behavioral health provider to assist the member in understanding and making an informed choice of housing options they may be presented.

The Housing Administrator will work with AHCCCS and its health plans to prioritize eligible members from the housing waitlists that considers the following prioritization criteria:

- **Cost, Medical/Behavioral Health Need, or Immediate Care Coordination Need** – The Housing Administrator will share waitlists with health plans for the purposes of identifying waitlist members that the health plan has identified on their as “high cost/high needs” roster as defined by AHCCCS Medical Policies Manual (AMPM) 1021 or care coordination for members with acute needs,
- **Actual Homeless Status** – Priority should be given to persons experiencing literal homeless including living on streets, shelters or other places not meant for habitation (See definition of homelessness included in Eligibility). If this prioritization applies to the applicant, the behavioral health provider must submit documentation of homelessness. This may include:
  - **Homeless Verification letter from a shelter or outreach team,**

- **HMIS verification, or**
- **Self-attestation,**
- **VI-SPDAT** – VI-SPDAT Priority ranges will be based on standards set for the VI-SPDAT,
  - VI-SPDAT High Acuity Scores: Families 9 or higher, Single Adults – 8 or higher or 65+ for the full SPDAT,
  - If this prioritization applies to the applicant, the behavioral health provider must submit a completed VI-SPDAT form,
- Special Care or Coordination needs per health plan,
- Continuum of Care Coordination, and
- Time and date of the application.

As new members are added to the wait list they will be prioritized based upon the above defined criteria. When the Housing Administrator is notified or determines there is housing vacancy, the Housing Administrator will match the vacancy with the top prioritized person on the wait list who is eligible for the unit to offer the vacancy.

There are a limited number of projects and programs within the AHP housing facilities that are restricted to members with specific service supports or programming (e.g., ACT Housing). Wait lists and prioritization for these programs will be limited to applicants who were specifically identified for these programs by their provider and documented in their application/eligibility documentation. The Housing Administrator will notify these programs of the referral to allow intake into the associated services. Eligible special population members will be prioritized using the criteria enumerated above.

Members' prioritization for housing will not consider source of referral (e.g., ACC v. ACC-RBHA, Fee for Service). On a regular basis, AHCCCS will work with Housing Administrator and internal and external stakeholders to evaluate and amend housing priorities, as necessary.

#### **CARE MANAGEMENT COORDINATION**

In accordance with AHCCCS ACOM 448 and AHCCCS AMPM 310B policies, the care team provides housing support services to the member throughout the housing process. The care team and housing administrator work collaboratively to ensure that the member obtains housing being offered by the Housing Administrator and retains housing stability. Supportive services will include, but not be limited to:

- Ensuring the member is document ready for the orientation/intake,
- Providing transportation for the member to attend the orientation/intake,
- Assist with housing search by providing transportation, accompanying the member to view units and assist with completion of landlord applications,
- Advocate for member with landlord if member has background issues that would impact their ability to secure a lease,
- Attend lease signing with member,
- Pick up and deliver start-up box and gift card for member from Housing Administrator offices on move-in day,
- Assist member with an orientation of their new neighborhood: location of stores and pharmacy, mass transit locations, mailbox, etc.,
- Perform weekly home visits the first month of tenancy, and
- Perform regular home visits, especially monthly in the first three months per SAMHSA best practices for permanent supportive housing.

**HOUSING ORIENTATION AND INTAKE**

After selection from the waitlist, households will be invited to a Housing Orientation/Intake conducted by HOM. Notification of the date and time will be coordinated via an email to the case manager who applied for the housing assistance. It is the clinical care teams' responsibility for ensuring the member and a clinical care team member or a supportive service team member are informed of the date and time and ensure the member is ready for the orientation/intake.

Where the Housing Administrator has local offices, the orientation/intake will be performed at the offices. If there is no office convenient to the location where the member will be residing or is currently residing, Housing Administrator will perform a digital/video remote orientation and intake. The clinical care team will be responsible for hosting the remote orientation/intake with the member, assisting with the intake paperwork, and ensuring the paperwork is returned in accordance with remote orientation process. This orientation must be completed prior to participation in the program.

All adult members of the household (aged 18 and above) are required to attend and complete an orientation to participate in the program. A member of their care team must accompany each household. The care team will assist the households gather required documents prior to the appointment. They will attend orientations with all adult members of the household. The care team members will aid the household when they have questions, participate in the orientation so they are best equipped to assist the household with their housing search, and assist them with completing the intake and data collection form.

The orientation may include multiple households. The presentation covers information on the program, how to conduct their housing search, clarification of the roles of the care team and Housing Administrator staff, program rules and required notices, as well as discussion on housing maintenance.

Households will participate in an intake after the orientation. This will include meeting their housing specialist and review of their household demographics, income, assets, and other private information. Upon completion of the intake and review of their information, members will be provided with a pre-calculation form showing their portion of the rent and their housing ticket. Members are provided access to Padmission, our online search platform, as well as other resources to assist in their housing search.

Supportive services providers will assist members with preparing for, and attending, this meeting. All adult household members will need to bring a Photo ID, Social Security Card (or other verification of citizenship), and verification of income, assets, and expenses. Birth certificates are required for minors. *Members who do not have all the required documents may need to return to complete their orientation once they have obtained the required documents.* Households will begin their search for their housing unit after the intake appointment has been completed.

Households will receive up to three opportunities to complete the orientation and intake before their application will be removed from the waitlist. Removal from the waitlist may be appealed using the grievance and appeals processed outlined in this guidebook.

**REQUIRED INFORMATION**

All program applicants and members are required to complete all required program paperwork including the Intake and Data Collection form, Authorization for the Release of Information forms, and other associated paperwork included in this packet. The Housing Administrator also must obtain a copy of the member's Social Security card and picture identification.

All household members over eighteen years old must be present and must sign all required forms. Refusal to complete and/or sign any required paperwork may be grounds for denial of assistance.

**INCOME AND SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS**

A member’s income, or lack of income, is not a housing eligibility criterion. Income will be evaluated to determine the member’s rent contribution. Members with income are expected to pay up to 30 percent of their income towards their rent payment. Therefore, income will be reviewed to calculate the member’s payment and the AHP subsidy amount. The Housing Administrator will use HUD Housing Choice Voucher policy for the determination of income, rent and subsidy amounts. 24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 24 CFR 982.

Income Determination – The Housing Administrator has an established income determination policy that includes the following:

- Classification of Income, in general, in determining member income including classification of assets, should follow HUD Standard or industry standards,
- AHCCCS Housing programs will not require any minimum rent contribution from member, and
- Housing Administrator will require the member to certify zero income if the member has no income at the time of subsidy.

**OCCUPANCY STANDARDS**

The Housing Administrator the following guidelines to determine the size of unit that a household is eligible for:

Number of Bedrooms	Number of Persons	
	Minimum	Maximum
0	1	1
1	1	3
2	2	5
3	4	7
4	5	9
5	6	11

The basis for the determination of a unit size should apply to most families. In some cases, however the relationship, age, sex, health, or disability of the family members may justify assignments of a larger unit size than that which would result from strict application of this criteria. Such flexibility is permissible to the extent the determinations are made based on these factors. The Partner must first approve such allowable determinations. More information on the determination of unit size is available in Housing Administrator policies.

**APPLYING PAYMENT STANDARDS**

AHCCCS Housing programs base payment standards on HUD’s Annual Fair Market Rent (FMR) schedule for the designated geography to calculate housing assistance payments for members. *Payment standard* is defined as “the maximum monthly assistance payment for a member assisted in the housing program (before deducting the total tenant payment by the member)” [24 CFR 982.4(b)].

This maximum amount includes the cost of rent (plus any tax) and all utilities. Households required to place utilities in their name will be granted a utility allowance. This allowance is based on local utility schedules and not actual usage. The utility allowance is added to the lease rent, rental tax, and other mandatory and eligible charges, to determine if the unit is under the payment standard.

The payment standard for a member is the lower of 1) the payment standard for the member unit size, which is defined as the appropriate number of bedrooms for the member under the Housing Administrator's subsidy standards [24 CFR 982.4(b)] or 2) the payment standard for the size of the dwelling unit rented by the member.

The Housing Administrator may establish an exception payment standard for a designated part of a geographical location to allow a higher or lower payment standard above the payment standard due to housing affordability, market conditions or other circumstances. The Housing Administrator will work with AHCCCS to establish a process, necessary documentation, and circumstances in which exceptions to the Payment Standard will be approved. If a member's unit is located in the exception area, the Housing Administrator must use the appropriate payment standard for the exception area.

#### **UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS**

A member may receive a Utility Reimbursement Payment (URP) if they are responsible to pay their own utilities and the Utility Allowance exceeds the family contribution towards their housing. Utility Reimbursement Payments are calculated based on the local schedules and not actual usage. The payments are paid directly to the utility company/provider on the first day of each month. Households are financially responsible for any costs incurred by the household that exceed the utility allowance.

#### **HOUSEHOLD OBLIGATIONS**

The household (including each household member) must:

- a) Supply any information that Housing Administrator determines to be necessary including information for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition,
- b) Disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information,
- c) Supply any information requested to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit to exceed thirty (30) days,
- d) Allow Housing Administrator to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice,
- e) Notify Housing Administrator and the owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease,
- f) Use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence,
- g) Notify Housing Administrator in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child within 10 days of the event,
- h) Request Housing Administrator written approval before adding any other family member as an occupant of the unit,
- i) Notify Housing Administrator in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit within 10-days of the change,
- j) Give Housing Administrator a copy of any owner eviction notice, and
- k) Pay utility bills, keep all applicable utility services connected, and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease.

The household member (including each household member) must not:

- a) Own or have any interest in the unit (other than in a cooperative, or the owner of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space),
- b) Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease,
- c) Commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program,
- d) Engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises,
- e) Sublease or let the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit,
- f) Receive Tenant Based Rental Assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other Federal, State, or local housing assistance program,
- g) Damage the unit or premises (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guests to damage the unit or premises,
- h) Receive housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless Housing Administrator has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities, or
- i) Engage in behaviors that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

### **SEARCHING FOR A UNIT**

Households are allotted 60 days from the initial orientation to locate and secure a dwelling unit. Should they fail to locate and secure an acceptable unit within 60 days, the households can work with their care team to request an extension. Extension requests will be granted in cases where households have been actively searching for housing. In some cases, households have experienced barriers to their searching process which may result in an approved extension. Care teams will assist with this search by actively using location resources, such as Padmission. Additional supports may be needed, including but not limited to:

- Transportation to look at units,
- Advocacy to the prospective property managers,
  - Assist households with explaining their rental history,
  - Assist households with requesting individual reviews when denied tenancy due to criminal history,
- Completion of the rental history log,
- Gathering documentation,
- Provide resources to aid with the housing search,
- Assist with rental applications,
  - Confirm unit meets program payment standards,
  - Discuss how utilities will be handled with the unit,
  - Tour the property with the tenant,
  - Consider the condition of the unit – both inside and outside, and
  - Consider the location of the unit (bus lines, proximity to doctors' offices, pharmacies, groceries).

**ALLOWABLE HOUSING TYPES**

There are various types of housing assistance a member may receive through AHP. To recognize member choice and support service plans, AHCCCS will allow scattered site housing subsidy to be applied in numerous permanent housing settings including leased apartments or houses. All AHCCCS subsidized housing shall have a standard rental agreement that conforms with ARLTA.

AHCCCS housing subsidy will **NOT** be allowed in the following situations:

- Payment or mortgage or other ownership related payments,
- Payment of room and board expenses in behavioral health residential facilities or other clinical care-based settings, including halfway houses or other transitional housing settings,
- Purchase or rental of non-fixed mobile units including RV's, trailers, vans, trucks, or other automobiles,
- Facilities that do not meet state habitability standards or Housing Quality Standards established by Housing Administrator (see Description below),
- Hotels, motels, or other short-term rental facilities without a lease,
- Properties owned by relatives or related parties, or
- Purchase, or rental, of furniture.

AHCCCS housing will provide subsidy for most other permanent housing leasing settings including but not limited to apartment, row-house, town house, single family detached homes and manufactured housing (see 24 CFR 982), This includes some special settings if they meet applicable fair housing, ARLTA habitability standards, and/or other housing quality inspection standards established by the Housing Administrator.

**SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY UNITS (SRO)**

Single room occupancy (SRO) units provide living and sleeping space for the exclusive use of the occupant, but require the occupant share sanitary and/or food preparation facilities with others. More than one person may not occupy an SRO unit. Housing regulations do not limit the number of units in an SRO facility, but the size of a facility may be limited by local ordinances.

When providing housing assistance in an SRO unit, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted person, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used. The payment standard for SRO housing is 75 percent of the 0-bedroom payment standard amount. An owner should not receive more than the SRO rate for SRO housing:

- The utility allowance for an assisted person residing in SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero-bedroom utility allowance or
- The HAP for an assisted occupant in an SRO facility is the lower of the SRO payment standard amount minus the TTP or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

**MOBILE HOMES/MANUFACTURED HOUSING**

AHCCCS Housing funds may be used to lease mobile /manufactured homes subject to HQS approval and other minimum AHP housing standards for all subsidized units. AHCCCS Housing funding/subsidy may not cover the purchase or mortgage related to ownership of manufactured or mobile homes. For purposes of this policy, a mobile home or manufactured home will be defined under the AZ Mobile Home Landlord and Tenant Act (13 ARS §1409).



AHCCCS Housing funds may also be used to pay for pad lease if member owns the mobile home as short-term rental assistance in eviction prevention scenarios at the discretion of the AHP Housing Administrator.

### REVIEW OF LEASE/TERM OF ASSISTED TENANCY

In reviewing the appropriateness of the lease, AHCCCS requires the following terms be present:

- A minimum, one-year initial lease but will permit the Housing Administrator to approve a shorter initial lease term if needed to secure member housing,
- The lease should provide that during the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent to owner. Finally, any provisions for renewal of the dwelling lease will be stated in the dwelling lease,
- There are no AHCCCS requirements regarding any renewal extension terms, except that they must be in the dwelling lease if they exist,
- For units constructed prior to 1978, owners must either 1) certify that the unit, common areas, and exterior have been found to be free of lead-based paint by a certified inspector; or 2) attach a lead-based paint disclosure statement, and
- The property owner and/or management company must be acceptable. Items that may disqualify an owner include conflict of interest, removal from program for prior violations of housing quality or fraud related to accepting housing subsidies, prior criminal activity, questionable ownership, or title to property, threats, or harassment of member with an SMI designation, or non-compliance with Fair Housing or other legal requirements.

### PAYMENT OF REQUIRED FEES AND DEPOSITS

Housing Administrator may assist with application fees, security deposits, non-refundable deposits, and utility deposits required for the member's move-in.

#### ***Application Fee***

Housing Administrator will pay the application fee that is charged by the landlord. We will only pay for **one (1) application fee at a time**. If the member is denied tenancy at one unit, we may continue to pay for application fees at additional units until the household has been approved for tenancy.

#### ***Non-Refundable Fees***

Housing Administrator will pay reasonable non-refundable fees. These may be called the redecorating fee, administrative fee, cleaning deposit etc.

#### ***Refundable Security Deposits***

Housing Administrator will pay for reasonable refundable security deposit charges. The landlord may not charge a deposit that is more than one and a half times the monthly rent and they may not charge program members more than what they normally charge other tenants.

The refundable security deposits are **not** gifts. At time move-out of the unit, the security deposit will be refunded to the Housing Administrator.

#### ***Utility Deposits***

Housing Administrator will pay required utility deposit(s) directly to the utility company and assist members, when possible, with putting the bill(s) in their name. The head of household will be required to call the Utility Provider to confirm their account.

**Other Charges**

Housing Administrator does not pay any pet rent or pet deposits. Landlords may ask for documentation for emotional support or service animals. Please see the member's lease for details. The member's service team shall assist assistance with these requests.

Renter's insurance will only be paid when included in the contract rent and does not exceed the payment standard. Optional charges are the responsibility of the household, such as covered parking.

**TENANCY APPROVAL**

Once a member has identified a unit that they would like to lease using their subsidy, the landlord will submit a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) that will include the necessary documentation needed for review and approval of the lease and residence.

- Housing Administrator will complete its determination within ten (10) business days of receiving all required information,
- Prior to approving the assisted tenancy and execution of a HAP contract, Housing Administrator must ensure that all required actions and determinations have been completed. These actions include:
  - Ensuring that the unit is eligible (See Allowable Housing Types),
  - Completing the required inspection of the unit to ensure it meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS),
  - Review the lease offered by the owner to ensure it is approvable,
  - Reviewing the rent to ensure rent reasonableness,
  - Verifying the rent and member income to ensure the share of rent to be paid by the member does not exceed 30 percent of the member's monthly adjusted income,
  - Reviewing the owner to confirm it is an eligible owner, not disapproved by Housing Administrator, with no conflicts of interest,
  - Verifying the member and the owner have executed the lease, including the Tenancy Addendum, and the lead-based paint disclosure information,
- If the terms of the RFTA/proposed lease are changed for any reason, including but not limited to negotiation with Housing Administrator, Housing Administrator will obtain corrected copies of the RFTA and proposed lease, signed by the member and the owner,
- If the tenancy cannot be approved for any reason, the owner and the member will be notified and given the opportunity to address any reasons for disapproval. Owner and member will be instructed of the steps that are necessary to approve the tenancy,
- Where the tenancy is not approvable because the unit is not acceptable, the member must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher, and
- If the tenancy is not approvable due to rent affordability (including rent burden and rent reasonableness), Housing Administrator will attempt to negotiate the rent with the owner. If a new, approvable rent is negotiated, the tenancy will be approved. If the owner is not willing to negotiate an approvable rent, the member must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

**RENT REASONABLENESS**

It is the Housing Administrator's responsibility to ensure that payment standards are sufficient to assure maximum program utilization, to provide program applicants and members with adequate housing choice, and to assure that the rents charged by owners at the time of initial lease up and at each annual re-certification are reasonable based upon unassisted comparable units in the rental market. Rent

reasonableness will be based upon comparison to HUD annual Fair Market Rent standards as well and by comparison to comparable, unassisted housing units in the market. The rent must not exceed rents charged by the same owner or property for an equivalent assisted or unassisted unit the same building or complex. The rent for an assisted unit may not exceed the reasonable rent for that area even if FMR is higher.

### **THE INSPECTION PROCESS**

Once the Housing Administrator receives the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA), the assigned Housing Specialist will contact the landlord to schedule an HQS Inspection for both scattered site and CLP units. The unit selected by the member must pass HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection. The following is a list of the most frequently asked questions and answers regarding the inspection process:

Housing Administrator will schedule the inspection with the landlord once all paperwork has been returned.

Inspections are typically scheduled within two to four working days, after the landlord has prepared the unit for inspection. Inspections are scheduled on a first come, first-serve basis. All utilities must be on prior to an inspection.

1. *How is the inspection scheduled and who is responsible?*  
Once the member or the landlord returns all the required forms from the **Landlord Information Packet** to Housing Administrator, an HQS Inspection will be scheduled by HOM staff.
2. *How long does it take for an initial inspection to be scheduled?*  
An inspection can be scheduled within two to four working days. Most importantly, the landlord must notify Housing Administrator that the unit is ready for inspection. Inspections are scheduled on a first come, first-serve basis. All utilities must be on prior to an inspection.
3. *What will the Inspector be looking for?*  
Inspectors will be looking for overall health and safety items along with federal housing quality standards. The Orientation Packet contains a pamphlet called "A Good Place to Live" which outlines the things that the Inspector will be looking for during the inspection.
4. *What happens if the unit fails the initial inspection?*  
If the unit fails the inspection, the member may not move into the unit. All failed items must be corrected, and the unit must be re-inspected to ensure that all failed items have been corrected.
5. *What happens after the unit passes inspection?*  
The adult members of the household must schedule an appointment with the landlord to sign the landlord's lease.
6. *When can the member move in?*  
Once the household has signed all leasing paperwork with the landlord, the landlord will give them the keys and they may move into their new home.

**SIGNING A LEASE**

After the inspection has passed, the household may sign their lease. A lease is a legally binding contract. Members sign the landlord's standard lease. Care teams are expected to assist the household with the lease signing appointment, especially if the household will need help understanding the lease terms. The lease is between the household and the landlord; the Housing Administrator does not have any responsibility or liability associated with the lease. Care teams shall assist households with this process but must refrain from adding themselves to the lease as emergency contacts or other responsible parties. Care teams cannot guarantee rental payments on behalf of the AHP. Care Teams are encouraged to provide the landlord with their contact information so the landlord may contact them if housing stability issues arise.

By signing the landlord's lease, households are agreeing to live in the unit for **one year**. Member households are also agreeing to pay the rent for the unit on the landlord's due date every month. The Housing Administrator will sign a separate contract with the landlord. The obligations under the lease are the household's responsibility to fulfill. Failure to abide by the lease can lead to eviction, legal judgments against the household, damage to household members' credit, and possible termination of rental assistance through the Permanent Supportive Housing Program.

**TURNING ON UTILITY SERVICES**

The landlord will have utilities on in the unit at the time of the inspection. If utilities are to be paid for by the member, the member will get utilities established in their name after the inspection has passed.

Care teams shall assist members with contacting the utility companies within 3 days of signing the lease. These account numbers must be communicated to the Housing Administrator within five (5) days of signing the lease; utility reimbursement and utility deposit payments will be released after receipt of these account numbers. The Housing Administrator is able to pay the required utility deposits for all utility companies for a household's unit in the program. AHP will pay for these deposits, and the monthly utility reimbursement payment only; the program maintains no responsibility for the entire utility bill.

**START-UP BOX AND GIFT CARD**

Households are eligible for a start-up box after moving into their first unit with the program. Care teams will assist members with picking up the start-up box and gift card. Housing Administrator will release start-up box and gift card to the care team on the member's behalf.

**CARE TEAM ROLE WITH THE MOVE IN PROCESS**

Care teams will assist households with their move into their new unit. While each household has individual needs, typically care teams will:

- Assist the member in completing the move-in checklist with the property manager (noting any damages to the unit prior to be moving in),
- Assist with lease signing,
- Assist with utility service set up if required,
- Pick-up, or confirm member has received, their start-up box and gift card,
- Connect members to the nearest pharmacy, and
- Confirm member understands when tenant portion of rent is due and method of payment.

### **ANNUAL RECERTIFICATIONS**

Members must attend a recertification appointment at least once a year. All family members ages 18 and older are required to attend. Appointment letters will be mailed and emailed indicating the date, time and location of the appointment and required verifications and documents. Appointments may be re-scheduled provided the re-scheduled date occurs within the recertification time window. Failure to recertify eligibility on an annual basis is grounds for termination from the program.

Care teams play an important role in assisting household with recertifications. All affiliated service providers will receive an email notification of the annual recertification. They will contact the member to discuss the process, assist with obtaining supporting documentation, and accompany the household to the appointment if the household needs this level of support. Working to maximize housing retention for AHCCCS members is an important role for care teams; assisting members so they may successfully recertify is one of the many ways care teams improve housing retention.

### **INTERIM RECERTIFICATIONS**

Tenant rent is based on household income. Tenants may not change their rental obligations themselves; therefore, it is imperative households communicate changes in their income within 10 days of the change. Tenant rent is not changed retroactively; decreases in household income that occur near the end of the month must be reported immediately. Household income will be re-evaluated, and tenant rent recalculated by the Housing Specialist. Households will receive a minimum of 30-days' notice when their rent increases. Households must report all changes in income; the Housing Administrator will determine whether the change in income will result in an interim change. Failure to report changes to household income may result in termination from the supportive housing program.

### **ANNUAL HQS INSPECTIONS**

Housing Administrator will perform a Housing Quality Standards Inspection on an annual basis to ensure that Housing Quality Standards continue to be met. You will receive a 48-hour notice prior to the scheduled inspection. If you are not available for the inspection, the landlord will let the inspector into the unit. Only the landlord can reschedule this appointment.

### **LEASE RENEWAL PROCESS**

Rental assistance is only payable when leases are valid. While a month-to-month lease may be allowed for special circumstances, the AHP will require 12-month leases on an annual basis. Housing Administrator staff will initiate the lease renewal process with the landlord and negotiate any rental increase that may be request by the landlord.

During the annual recertification process, it will be the members decision to continue at their current residence or to locate a new dwelling unit. Payment of moving costs including deposits and app fees may be the members responsibility to pay.

**Service Coordination:** With appropriate releases, member's care team should assist in ensuring that the member completes all lease renewal and re-certification processes. Key roles may include reviewing notices, assisting in gathering documentation, identifying any income or relevant changes, scheduling inspections or other coordination with the Housing Administrator.

### **GUESTS**

AHP members may have visitors and overnight guests consistent with the terms of their lease. The lease must provide that the tenant has the right to exclusive use and occupancy of the leased unit by the

members of the household authorized to reside in the unit in accordance with the lease, including reasonable accommodation of their guests [24 CFR 966.4(d)]. The head of household is responsible for the conduct of visitors and guests, inside the unit as well as anywhere on or near the leased premises [24 CFR 966.4(f)]. Visitors or other persons may be considered unauthorized residents, if lease terms related to guests are not followed or if the individual stays beyond the time limits identified in this policy.

### **Guest Exceptions**

A member may be excepted from the guest policies and stated time limits in the following situations:

- A member may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure expected to last 30 consecutive days). Written approval of this, prior to the guest's arrival, must be obtained from the landlord and Housing Administrator.
- Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a member has visitation privileges, which are not included as a household/family member because they live outside of the member's housing unit more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

Former residents who have been evicted are not permitted as overnight guests. Guests who represent the unit address as their residence address for receipt of benefits or other purposes will be considered unauthorized occupants. In addition, guests who remain in the unit beyond the allowable time limit will be considered unauthorized occupants, and their presence may constitute a lease violation.

### **ANIMALS**

Subject to rules established in the lease or other property rules including required additional animal deposits and any notices to the property owner or manager, a member may have a reasonable type and number of animal(s). 10-II.D. Animal owners must maintain animals responsibly, in accordance with lease and property rules and policies, and in compliance with applicable state and local public health, animal control, and animal cruelty laws and regulations.

Service Coordination: If member has or intends to own an animal, the member's care team should work with the member to ensure the member maintains the animal(s), encourage appropriate animal selection for leased space, assist with any documentation or requirements related to service or companion animals if appropriate, and assist to minimize risk that the animal interferes with the member's housing stability.

### **TRANSFER OF SUBSIDY**

In general, flexibility in tenancy is a hallmark of AHCCCS's housing programs. To this end, members should be allowed to move to other eligible housing and transfer their subsidy to the new lease. This includes good cause transfers as well as emergency transfer situations. The new lease must meet all AHP standards and processes documented in this policy and follow any processes defined in the Housing Administrator's Administrative Plan. Emergency transfers should be a priority for the Housing Administrator to ensure continuity of the subsidy and re-location of the client. In the event of a transfer mandated by the AHP or Housing Administrator, the Housing Administrator will provide reasonable relocation costs. The following situations may require transfer of the housing subsidy:

- Good Cause Transfers,
  - The initial term of the lease has expired, and proper notice has been given to the landlord,
  - The member's lease has been terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the member,
  - For non-lease violations only: the owner has given the member a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the member, or has obtained a court judgment or other

process allowing the owner to evict the member. The Housing Administrator has terminated the assisted lease for the family's unit for the owner's breach of the HAP contract,

- A clinical provider determines that the member's current unit does not meet or interferes with the service plan or needs of the member,
- Changes in economic or other circumstances that may impact the member, or their service plan goals (e.g., loss of income, changes in physical health, changes in household composition or natural supports).
- Emergency Transfers,
  - Domestic Violence (VAWA) - The member has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the member. This condition applies even when the member has moved out of its unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification, if the member who is the victim reasonably believed that he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit,
  - Other situations or conditions in which the member's safety, physical or mental health will be threatened if they were to stay in the unit (e.g., uninhabitable conditions in unit, threats of violence).

#### **DENIAL OF MOVES**

The Housing Administrator should not put limits on member movement. AHCCCS policies permit the Housing Administrator, to deny a member permission to move their subsidy under the following conditions:

- Lack of Funding: The Housing Administrator can deny a member permission to move on grounds that the Housing Administrator/AHP does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance if (a) the move is initiated by the member, not the owner or Housing Administrator; (b) the Housing Administrator can demonstrate that the move will, in fact, result in higher subsidy costs; and (c) the Housing Administrator can demonstrate that it does not have sufficient funding in its annual budget to accommodate the higher subsidy costs. The Housing Administrator will create a list of members whose moves have been denied due to insufficient funding. When funds become available, the members on the list will take precedence over members on the waiting list. The Housing Administrator will use the same procedures for notifying members with open request to move when funds become available as it uses for notifying members on the waiting list, or
- Timing of Move: (Breaking of Lease and HAP Costs): In general, it is preferable to transfer subsidy at the conclusion of a lease prior to renewal. The member may elect to move to another unit at any time, if the relocation would result in the premature breaking of a lease and resulting lease penalties, the AHP may decline the move and the additional expenses. This policy does not apply in situation related to VAWA or in which the health or safety of the member may be negatively impacted by remaining in the current situation.

#### **CHANGES TO LEASE OR TENANCY/ANNUAL RECERTIFICATIONS**

Member circumstances may change throughout the lease/subsidy period prior to annual re-certifications (see below). The following changes in circumstances or situations are required to be reported to the Housing Administrator by the member and/or the landlord/property manager and may result in a re-certification and modification to the lease, subsidy payment, and/or HAP agreement. All changes should be reported within 10 days for the changed circumstances. A re-certification and any modifications will be performed in a reasonable time from when the Housing Administrator is notified. Failure to notify the Housing Administrator of these changes may result in consequences up to and including financial penalties

or termination of the subsidy. In most cases changes to rent or lease should become effective at the start of month following the reported change and modification of the lease.

### CHANGES IN MEMBER OR HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The Housing Administrator should be notified if there are changes in the composition of the household residing in the subsidized unit.

- **Change in Member Status or Ineligibility** – if the member upon whom eligibility for the AHP subsidy is absent 90 days or longer, including death, abandonment, incarceration, in patient, or in long term residential care should be reported and may result in termination of the subsidy.
- **Addition or Removal of Household Members** – Members may add or remove persons to the household including spouse or other domestic partnerships, children or other dependents, or other situations. The Housing Administrator should be notified in case the lease, subsidy, or housing accommodations need to be amended.
  - Addition of dependents due to births, adoption, or other legal action will do not require Housing Administrator approval,
  - All other changes in household composition may require approval by the Housing Administrator,
    - In general, addition or removal of household members due to legal action (e.g., marriage) will be approved,
    - All other additions or removals of household members may be approved at the discretion of the Housing Administrator,
      - With proper release of information, the Housing Administrator may consult with the member’s service provider or other advocates in evaluating the request for additional members in the household,
    - The Housing Administrator may also require additional adult members to provide additional information, documentation, or requirements imposed by the landlord or property management of the lessor such as background checks,
    - The addition of family or other members to the household should also include a re-certification of income since additional household member’s income should be included in the household rent used to determine tenant payment towards subsidy, or
    - A member’s lease may be allowed to be reassigned to a family member in the case of temporary suspension of the primary eligible member.

### CHANGES RELATED TO INCOME OR FINANCIAL SITUATION

In the event the member experiences a change in income, including any increases or decreases, it should be reported to the Housing Administrator since it may impact the member’s subsidy determination including the member’s portion of the rent or other subsidy or rent allowance. Report of any reduction or loss of income is extremely important since failure to pay the tenant portion of the HAP contract to the landlord may still result in eviction for non-payment of rent even if the Housing Administrator pays the monthly subsidy amount.

The Housing Administrator may require a re-examination at any time to correct an error in a previous certification or to investigate any allegations of fraud or other misrepresentation related to the certification process.



**CHANGE IN RENT**

After the initial lease period, the owner may request a rent increase according to the terms in the lease. All rent increases must be submitted in writing to the Housing Administrator by the owner, along with a copy of the rent increase notice to the member. The owner must provide 60 days advance notice to the member and the Housing Administrator.

Scattered Site Programs: In scattered site subsidy programs, the Housing Administrator will not approve owner/landlord requested rent changes prior to the termination of the lease and any change in rents will follow lease terms.

Community Living Programs (CLP): CLP owners may request changes to their unit rent reimbursement rates to the Housing Administrator for all units in the CLP property. The Housing Administrator will perform a rent reasonableness evaluation and comparison to appropriate area FMR standards as described above. Approval of the request for change in rent will be at the discretion of the Housing Administrator.

**CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP**

The Housing Administrator and member must receive a written request by the initial owner in order to change the HAP Contract payee and/or the address to which payment is to be sent. The Housing Administrator will process a change of ownership provided appropriate documentation is received from the new owner including proof of ownership, completed W9, a copy of management agreement or other legal agreement if owner is utilizing an agent to act on its behalf, an agreement to honor all HAP contracts, and any direct deposit or other information required to complete payment of subsidy.

**LANDLORD REPAIRS OR OTHER FACILITY MODIFICATIONS**

In the event the Owner or Landlord will be making significant repairs or modifications to the leased premises that may temporarily or permanently affect the quality or habitability of the lease property, the Owner or its agent should provide adequate notice of the changes to the member and the Housing Administrator. The Housing Administrator may require the owner to modify the rent based upon the impact of the change on behalf of the member.

**SERVICE COORDINATION REGARDING CHANGES**

While it is expected that a member may have changes in their circumstances described above, it is critical that these changes do not negatively impact the member's housing stability by violating lease terms or economic stability. Again, it is critical that the clinical provider secure appropriate releases of information from the member to share information and advocate on behalf of the member with the Housing Administrator and/or landlord. In the event of a change, timely notice of the change will allow appropriate amendments to the lease or HAP agreements.

In the event of changing household composition, every member should generally have choice around any allowable additional household members they would prefer to share their unit with. While choice should be recognized, the care team may want to make sure the member understands the potential legal, economic, and programmatic consequences of adding persons to the lease (e.g., exceeding occupancy standards). Additional household members should also be informed of tenant and lease obligations and expectations and additional household members must be legally able to reside in the leased unit. Service support staff may also need to update service plan or goals to ensure adequate wrap around supportive services, especially if member is taking on responsibilities and costs of childcare in adding a child member to the household. The Housing Administrator, upon recommendation and notification of the care

coordinator, may deny the addition of household members, if the addition of the additional member would be illegal (i.e., restraining order) or if, in the discretion of the Housing Administrator, there is evidence of domestic violence, criminality, or other factors which pose a possible danger to the wellbeing of the primary tenant and/or other tenants due the additional member.

In the event of changes in income, this may result in a reduction of the tenant portion of the rent which could be critical in reducing economic risk if the member cannot pay their portion of the rent. Depending on the severity of the lost income, the member may need to be determined zero income, in which case the AHP subsidy may need to cover the entire rent and remove the tenant portion.

## **TERMINATIONS**

### **LANDLORD TERMINATIONS AND/OR EVICTION**

There are two primary ways a landlord may terminate a lease (and the associated HAP contract).

First, the landlord/owner may terminate the lease at the end of the lease term by electing not to renew the lease. The landlord/owner is asked to provide the member and the Housing Administrator with at least sixty (60) days' notice prior to the end of the lease term of its intent not to renew as described in the lease. If the landlord does not give timely notice that they are not renewing the member's lease, the member elects to continue the lease, and the landlord accepts payment after the termination date of the prior lease, the lease will be converted to a lease on a month-to-month basis, and the landlord shall provide a thirty (30) day notice prior to ending the lease. Alternatively, the member can elect to move or terminate the lease in accordance with the notice requirement stipulated in the lease.

Second, the landlord may evict the member household at any time by instituting a court action for material or repeated violations of the lease or other good cause related to the member's non-compliance or violation of the lease. Care Team partners aware of lease termination or other lease related notices should share this information with the Housing Administrator within 24-hours of discovery.

It may be possible that the landlord agrees to obtain a mutual rescission of the lease with the member. The mutual rescission of the lease agreement must be signed by both parties and indicate the effective date of the rescission. A mutual rescission may be preferable to an eviction since it will not appear as a legal judgment against the member which could cause difficulties in future attempts to rent. Care Team partners requesting a mutual termination will discuss this with the member's Housing Administrator Housing Specialist.

In all lease terminations, renewals (or decisions not to renew) instituted by the landlord/owner, the landlord/owner must notify the AHCCCS Housing Administrator at, or before, the time of notification to the member.

Eviction or non-renewal of lease by the landlord or property owner does not mean a termination from the AHP or ability to maintain a housing subsidy in a new unit. The Housing Administrator will follow guidance in 24 CFR Subpart L when determining whether a member should be terminated from the housing program. A member will be considered *evicted* if the member moves after a legal eviction order has been issued, whether physical enforcement of the order was necessary.

The Housing Administrator has discretion on terminating assistance depending on the nature and severity of the offense that caused eviction. If possible, the member's care team should always try to re-house a member when possible or find the proper treatment if needed to allow the member to regain a housing placement.

### **AHP HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR TERMINATIONS**

While housing stability and retention of housing are key objectives of the AHP, there may be situations in which the AHP and its Housing Administrator may terminate a housing subsidy (HAP) and the member from the program. The member may also terminate their subsidy at any time.

The termination of housing for a member will be in accordance with housing program regulations and executed with discretion, taking into consideration the individual needs of housing program members. The Housing Administrator may opt to consult with the member's care team. The following grounds for termination shall be used for AHP.

1. The Housing Administrator has determined that the member is not in compliance with the housing program eligibility determination,
2. Member abandonment of lease or unit with no communication and the Housing Administrator cannot contact the member despite repeated good faith efforts,
3. It has been determined that the member has been using his/her subsidized unit for drug related or criminal activity,
4. The member fails to allow the housing provider to inspect the unit with proper notice.
5. The member is in non-compliance with the program rules,
6. The member fails to keep scheduled appointments with the Housing Administrator and/or provide required information for any certification or recertification after repeated notifications/ requests to the member and/or case manager from the Housing Administrator,
7. The member has vacated the unit in violation of the lease, sublet the unit, transferred the lease, or fails to notify the Housing Administrator before vacating the unit,
8. Incidents of harassment, threats, intimidation, or verbal or physical abuse of housing program-related staff, property management, and/or landlord/owner,
9. If the member's total member payment (TPP) equals or exceeds the gross rent for his/her dwelling unit, the Housing Administrator must request termination after six months of zero HAP,
10. Member does not use the subsidized unit as their principal place of residence,
11. Death of the member receiving the subsidy; remaining family members are eligible for subsidy through the term of the lease,
12. The member damages the unit in excess of normal wear and tear,
13. The member is receiving assistance under another subsidized housing program while being subsidized by AHP,
14. The member does not locate a unit in the allotted period of time, or
15. The member has misrepresented information to the housing provider, including any member or household member that misrepresented household income, assets, composition, or allowances, or failed to report a change in household composition or income.

#### **UNIT ABSENCE**

Abandonment - If the family appears to have vacated the unit without giving proper notice, the Housing Administrator will follow state and local landlord-tenant law pertaining to abandonment before taking possession of the unit. If necessary, the Housing Administrator will secure the unit immediately to prevent vandalism and other criminal activity.

It is reasonable that a member may be absent from their AHP housing unit for brief periods. In these situations, if a member receiving an AHP subsidy is going to be absent from the unit for an extended period the member or a designated care team must contact the Housing Administrator within 24 hours prior of the absence. An extended period is any period in which the unit will be vacant for a period of more than 90 days. Absences include any voluntary reasons (e.g., travel, stay with family) or involuntary leaves including medical or behavioral health treatment, hospital stays and/or incarceration. The AHP will maintain housing subsidies for voluntary or involuntary absences for up to 90 days.

If no notice is given, and the Housing Administrator is notified by the property owner or landlord that the unit has been abandoned (see Section Abandonment in this document), the Housing Administrator may terminate the HAP Contract for good cause based on abandonment at the expiration of the 90 days. The Housing Administrator can terminate the subsidy payment and lease prior to 90 days, if they have notice from the member or the members care team that the absence will be longer than 90 days (e.g., jail or prison sentence).

Month-to-month extensions on a case-by-case basis can be provided at the discretion of the Housing Administrator. The subsidy payments shall be paid to the owner during the first 90 days of a member not being in the unit unless the determination has been made to end subsidies prior to the 90 days. If the member's subsidy is terminated because the member was in treatment, in the hospital, or incarcerated, and the member remains eligible for AHP housing, the member will have priority on the wait list to receive the next available subsidy and will not prejudice the ability to receive future subsidies.

**Service Coordination:** The member's care team or approved designee should have appropriate releases of information from the member to ensure that they can share appropriate information about absences with the Housing Administrator. If made aware of a voluntary or involuntary absence, the care team should work with the member to inform the Housing Administrator and/or landlord as appropriate of the situation to avoid termination of the subsidy due to abandonment of the housing or payment of subsidy for an abandoned unit or one that the member will not be returning to for an extended period. For situations involving inpatient care or treatment, hospitalization or incarceration that are expected to just go over the 90-day limit, the service provider should coordinate with the Housing Administrator and request an extension to allow the member to maintain their housing at discharge for an appropriate transition.

### **INSUFFICIENT FUNDING**

AHP housing subsidies are contingent on the availability of state funding. If the Housing Administrator must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, the Housing Administrator will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

- 1) Freeze new admissions or subsidies for attrition savings,
- 2) Recommend freezing or termination of housing support programs such as damages reimbursement, move in kits or assistance, and/or eviction prevention, and
- 3) Review HAP contracts and recommend to AHCCCS a plan to terminate the number of HAP contracts needed in order to reduce HAP costs to a level within the AHP Housing Administrator's annual budget authority. Adequate notice and time would be provided to ensure coordination and transition of terminated members to appropriate housing placements.

### **TERMINATION CRITERIA**

As noted above, decision to terminate the member from the AHP subsidy program on any of the grounds above or any other good cause, is at the discretion of the Housing Administrator. In reviewing and making these decisions, the AHP Housing Administrator will consider all relevant circumstances in evaluating a decision to terminate or deny assistance. The Housing Administrator will use the *preponderance of the evidence* as the standard for making all termination decisions. Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole show that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. In reviewing termination decisions, the Housing Administrator may consider the following factors:

- The existence of mitigating factors including changes in financial situations such as loss of employment or income status, other financial difficulties, or environmental conditions such as the availability of other appropriate housing options,
- The ability to provide reasonable accommodations or other supports that may allow for future housing stability and success,
- Whether the cause of the unfavorable information may be that the applicant/member is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking,
- With proper releases or permission, consultation, or recommendations from the member's care team, and
- If there is more than one member of the household, the AHP Housing Administrator may offer to continue the housing subsidy to an eligible member contingent on removal of one or more other household members, if it is determined that those other household members are responsible for or contributed to the behavior that resulted in the possible termination of the subsidy.

Members whose subsidy is terminated may be eligible to re-apply for future subsidy assistance by re-applying through the normal referral and wait list processes. Members who receive assistance after previously being terminated from the AHP will not carry their previous termination with them; all terminations will be assessed without prejudice from previous terminations. However, referring clinical providers are encouraged to consider previous termination of assistance in assessing appropriateness of housing placement, appropriate housing setting and wrap around supportive services needs for future placements.

#### **TENANT TERMINATION FROM PROGRAM**

The member may terminate their participation from the program at any time. The member must provide reasonable written notice to the Housing Administrator, when possible, by signing a Voluntary Withdrawal Form. The Housing Administrator may waive the notice requirement if the termination is due to circumstances beyond the control of the Housing Administrator or the member. The notice of termination must be signed by the eligible member named on the lease. If the member remains after the termination of HAP date, the member will be responsible for any ongoing rent. The Housing Administrator will not pay subsidy for a unit after a notice of termination. If circumstances change for the member and they wish to rescind the termination, they are eligible to appeal. (See Notice of Termination)

#### **NOTICE OF TERMINATION**

In the event the Housing Administrator elects to terminate a member from the AHP program, the Housing Administrator will provide written notice to the member (and their care team if applicable) of proposed termination of housing assistance, which will include at minimum the following information:

- The effective date of the proposed termination,
- The basis of the termination decision,
- The family's right, if they disagree, to request an Appeal Hearing to be held prior to termination of assistance,
- Instructions on requesting an appeal,
- The household's option to assume the full rent without the subsidy and maintain the unit, and
- Protection Rights under the Violence Against Women's Act.

#### **REPORTING OF TERMINATIONS**

The Housing Administrator will maintain and provide regular quarterly reporting to the AHCCCS Housing Director of all terminations and the basis for each termination. AHCCCS may also require provider

documentation related to evictions or negative terminations of tenancies to determine if reasonable supportive service interventions or efforts were made to mitigate the cause of the eviction or avoid the termination.

#### **TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING, DATING VIOLENCE OR STALKING (VAWA)**

The Housing Administrator will follow the Violence against Women’s Act (VAWA) in regard to termination of assistance where domestic violence is suspected or reported. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), a participant or lawful occupant who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against affiliated individuals or others may be evicted or removed without evicting, removing, or otherwise penalizing a victim who is a lawful participant or occupant. The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA), provides that “criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, engaged in by a member of a tenant’s household or any guest or other person under the tenant’s control, shall not be cause for termination of the tenancy or occupancy rights, if the tenant or immediate family member of the tenant’s family is the victim or threatened victim of that abuse.” VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence.

The Housing Administrator will give all members information about their rights under VAWA in any termination action.

#### **BIFURCATION OF LEASE**

VAWA does not protect the perpetrator of Domestic Violence, Dating, Dating Violence, or Stalking. The perpetrator may be removed from lease and HAP agreement, or the lease may be bifurcated so that the victim, if eligible, can maintain housing subsidy separate from the perpetrator.

#### **SERVICE COORDINATION FOR TERMINATIONS**

As noted throughout this document, housing stability, and avoiding evictions or terminations of a member lease, and more importantly avoiding termination of housing subsidy support is of utmost importance. When possible, the member’s care team and providers should coordinate with the Housing Administrator to avoid evictions if possible. If the member’s lease will be terminated by the landlord, then the care team should work with the landlord and Housing Administrator to secure a mutual rescission of the lease to avoid longer term legal or financial consequences related to an eviction judgement. Finally, assuming that an eviction or termination of the current lease is unavoidable, the care team, or provider should work closely with the member and Housing Administrator to ensure that the member does not also lose their housing subsidy if possible so they can be placed in another unit. Finally, care teams and providers should evaluate all evictions or terminations on a case-by-case basis to determine what additional supportive and wrap around services, reasonable accommodations or alternative environments or other supports may be necessary for success in future housing placements. Any housing related safety needs shall be communicated to Housing Administrator.

## **HOUSING COMPLAINTS OR DISPUTES**

The AHCCCS Housing Administrator will be responsible for documenting and maintaining a process for the submission, review and resolution of complaints or disputes from members, providers, landlords/property managers/owners, or other stakeholders participating in the AHP related to the Housing Administrator duties described in this Guidebook, AHCCCS Policies or contract. This policy will include the Complainant's rights regarding:

- Processes and timeline for submission of complaint or dispute
- Process for Housing Administrator's review and resolution of disputes
- Process for appeal of Housing Administrator's initial resolution
- Process for timely notification to Complainant of all Housing Administrator proceeding, decisions, and appeals
- Complainant's right to review Housing Administrator documentation regarding the complaint or dispute
- Complainant's right to have representation and present evidence including witnesses

Upon exhaustion of all Housing Administrator complaint and appeal procedures, the Complainant has the right to submit an appeal of Housing Administrator housing determinations to the AHCCCS Director of Housing programs for final resolution.



## PROGRAM INTEGRITY AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

AHCCCS is committed to ensuring that funds made available to the Housing Administrator are spent in accordance with AHCCCS requirements. In addition to monitoring and ongoing oversight described above, AHCCCS will review all referrals, specific allegations, complaints, and tips from any source including other agencies, companies, and individuals, to determine if they warrant investigation. In order for AHCCCS to investigate, the allegation must contain at least one independently verifiable item of information, such as the name of an employer or the name of an unauthorized household member.

AHCCCS will investigate any reports or inconsistent information related to the member that is identified through file reviews and the verification process. Any allegations, information provided or investigation that indicates the presence or fraud waste or abuse must be immediately reported directly to the AHCCCS Office of Inspector General (OIG) (<https://www.azahcccs.gov/Fraud/AboutOIG/>). In the event of an OIG review and or investigation, the AHCCCS Housing Program will follow the guidance, direction and/or corrective action recommended or required by OIG.

The Housing Administrator will maintain policies and practices for inclusion to prevent errors and reduce the likelihood of fraud or program abuse. Key steps the Housing Administrator will include in their Administrative Plan:

- Housing orientation/intake materials will include information for members on compliance with program standards and identify potential areas of fraud and consequences. The Housing Administrator will have members sign an acknowledgement that these issues were presented and understood by the member. This acknowledgement will be kept in member's housing file,
- AHCCCS is prohibited from providing any funds to persons or organizations who have been determined to be on the exclusion list (LEIE, SAM). AHCCCS will establish processes to ensure that AHP funds will not support funding, salaries or other financial expenditures to persons or organizations on the exclusion lists. This includes landlords/owners, property management companies, providers, members, or other entities eligible for funding or reimbursement through the AHP. This would also include MCOs and or the AHCCCS Housing Administrator if they were to be on the exclusion list.
- Housing Administrator will ensure all relevant documents including warnings on the penalties and consequences of fraud,
- Housing Administrator will ensure their staff is trained on the program standards, program ethics and identifying potential errors and intentional fraud or program violations,
- Key prohibited examples of program abuse include:
  - By Members:
    - Offering bribes or illegal gratuities,
    - Offering payments or other incentives to a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements on the member's behalf,
    - Use of a false name or the use of falsified, forged, or altered documents,
    - Intentional misreporting or omission of family information or circumstances including financial information,
    - Admission of program abuse by an adult family member,
    - AHCCCS or the Housing Administrator may determine other actions to be program abuse based upon a preponderance of the evidence,
  - By the Housing Administrator or its Agents:
    - Failing to comply with AHP program requirements for personal gain,

- Failing to comply with AHP program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant or member,
- Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, members, owners, vendors, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to Housing Administrator,
- Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties,
- Sexual harassment,
- Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of AHP activities, policies, or practices,
- Misappropriating or misusing AHP funds,
- Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the AHP program,
- Intentionally falsifying CERs or other documentation related to AHP subsidies or assistance including damages requests, fees, or other reimbursable expenses,
- By the Landlord, Owner, or CLP Operator:
  - False statements to the Housing Administrator or member,
  - Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with AHP or any federal housing program,
- Any of the following will be considered evidence of owner program abuse:
  - Charging the family rent above or below the amount specified by the AHP and HAP,
  - Charging a security deposit other than that specified in the member's lease,
  - Charging the member for services that are provided to unassisted tenants at no extra charge,
  - Knowingly accepting housing assistance payments for any month(s) after the member family has vacated the unit,
  - Knowingly accepting incorrect or excess housing assistance payments.
  - Offering bribes or illegal gratuities,
  - Offering payments or other incentives to a member as an inducement to make false or misleading statements related to the AHP or assistance provided.
  - Residing in the unit with an assisted member, and
  - Intentionally falsifying rent reimbursement requests or other documentation related to AHP subsidies or assistance including damages requests, fees, or other reimbursable expenses.

#### **CONSEQUENCES – CONSIDERATION OF REMEDIES**

As noted above, any errors or instances of program fraud, waste or abuse by a member, landlord/owner, the Housing Administrator or AHCCCS staff, must be reported directly to AHCCCS' Office of Inspector General (OIG).

#### **MEMBER CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

AHCCCS and its Housing Administrator shall take into consideration 1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of member or household members, 2) any special circumstances surrounding the case, 3) any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, 4) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

When AHCCCS or the Housing Administrator determines a member has committed program abuse, the following remedial actions may be taken:

- Require the member to repay any amounts owed to the program,
- Revise the HAP or voucher to reflect actual available subsidy and/or change member contribution. This may be applied retroactively based on the determination of the start of the error or program abuse,
- Require, as a condition of receiving or continuing assistance, that a culpable family member or other resident not reside in the unit,
- Deny admission or terminate the member's lease, and
- Refer the member to AHCCCS Office of Inspector General for state or federal criminal prosecution if necessary.

### **HOUSING ADMINISTRATOR CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

This section specifically addresses actions of a Housing Administrator staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the AHP. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the Housing Administrator's personnel policy. In evaluating errors or program abuse on the part of the Housing Administrator or its agents, AHCCCS will evaluate: 1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of the Housing Administrator or its agent; 2) any special circumstances surrounding the case, 3) the Housing Administrator's knowledge or approval of its agent's error or abuse, and 4) the Housing Administrator efforts to mitigate or correct its agent's error or program abuse including use of internal policies or controls.

When AHCCCS or the Housing Administrator determines the Housing Administrator or its agent has committed program abuse, the following remedial actions may be taken:

- Require the Housing Administrator or its agent to repay any amounts owed to the program and/or affected members. Repayment to an affected member will occur regardless of if the incorrect payment resulted from error or program abuse,
- Require the Housing Administrator to terminate or relieve the agent of their duties with the AHP program if possible and subject to Housing Administrator's HR policies,
- Revise affected member's HAP or voucher to reflect actual available subsidy and/or change member contribution. This may be applied retroactively based on the determination of the start of the error or program abuse. The member will not be responsible for errors or underpayments resulting from the Housing Administrator or its agent's error or program abuse, and/or
- Refer the Housing Administrator or its agent to AHCCCS's Office of Inspector General for state or federal criminal prosecution if necessary.

### **LANDLORD, HOUSING PROVIDER, OR OWNER ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

AHCCCS and Housing Administrator will take into consideration 1) the seriousness of the offense; 2) the length of time since the violation has occurred; and 3) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

When AHCCCS or the Housing Administrator determines that the owner has committed program abuse, the following actions may be taken:

- Terminate the HAP contract,
- Bar the owner from future participation in any AHP programs,
- Refer the case to state or federal officials including the HUD Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG) for prosecution,

- Require the owner to repay excess housing assistance payments. The Housing Administrator may recover overpaid amounts by withholding housing assistance payments due for subsequent months, and/or
- If the ineligible facility, landlord, or provider is providing units under Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&R) related to the purchase of the property or facility with AHCCCS SMI HTF funds, the AHCCCS Director of Housing will be notified and additional corrective action may be taken to ensure compliance including AHCCCS remedies documented in the CC&R.

**NOTICE AND APPEALS**

The Housing Administrator will inform the relevant party in writing of its findings and remedies within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the investigation including any referral to AHCCCS. The notice will include: 1) a description of the error or program abuse, 2) the basis on which the Housing Administrator determined the error or program abuses, 3) the remedies to be employed, and 4.) the family's right to appeal the results through an informal hearing or grievance hearing.

If the error or program abuse involves the Housing Administrator, AHCCCS will notify the Housing Administrator within 10 days of the conclusion of its investigation or corrective action. The AHCCCS notice will also include the elements required of the Housing Administrator's notice.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOCUMENTATION OR ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

Documents and other evidence obtained by the Housing Administrator and/or AHCCCS during the course of an investigation will be considered "work product." The Housing Administrator Administrative Plan will detail procedures to ensure "work product" documentation is maintained in a secure manner and that errors and program abuse investigations and related materials are not shared with staff other than those directly involved or participating in the investigation.

AHCCCS will ensure all documentation or investigation materials related to errors or program abuse, including any referrals to AHCCCS' Office of the General Council (OGC) or AHCCCS' Office of Inspector General (OIG) are confidential. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation.

**RECORD RETENTION**

The Housing Administrator will establish policies to maintain all housing information for up to seven (7) years. Lease information and history must be maintained for the term of the lease and up to seven (7) years after the end of assistance/member participation. The Housing Administrator will also have policies to ensure all files and records including both physical and electronic records are secured appropriately.

## DEFINITIONS

- **ACC-RBHA:** Arizona Complete Care and Regional Behavioral Health Authority
- **AHCCCS:** The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System – A managed health care program which pertains to health care services provided pursuant to A.R.S. 36-2903 et seq., and is also the name of the State agency
- **ACOM:** AHCCCS Contractor Operations Manual
- **DBHS:** Arizona Department of Behavioral Health Services
- **AHCCCS Housing Administrator:** The contracted organization who provides services outlined in the AHCCCS Housing Administrator scope of work
- **AHP:** AHCCCS Housing Program(s) are those funded by Arizona Non-Title XIX/XXI State SMI General Housing and Supported Housing funds
- **AMPM:** AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual
- **Applicant:** Person who is listed on the application as in need of housing services from the AHP
- **Application:** The process of initiating the AHP housing process by submission of form by providers on behalf of eligible persons
- **Arizona Residential Landlord Tenant Act (ARLTA):** (ARS §33-1301 *et seq.*) Arizona statutes governing residential leasing and Landlord and Tenant rights and obligations.
- **Care Team:** The combination of the member’s assigned clinical provider and housing support service provider. If the member’s GSA does not have separate housing support service providers, then the care team is made up of solely the clinical provider.
- **Community Living Program (CLP):** Fixed Site Housing for SMI members. Properties are purchased or rehabilitated with Arizona State SMI Housing Trust Funds on behalf of a provider owner/operator with a requirement for the property to provide PSH for persons with an SMI designation. AHP often provides rental support or subsidies for program members residing in CLP units.
- **Clinical provider/provider/health home:** For purposes of AHP, any AHCCCS contracted Managed Care Organization (MCO), Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authority (TRBHA), or AHCCCS registered provider responsible for completing referrals or providing services to an AHCCCS enrolled member and who may make a referral to housing to the AHP. The provider or its agent should have knowledge and can document the member’s eligibility and need for housing. **CMS:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, a branch within the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The federal agency responsible for Medicaid oversight, which includes AHCCCS.
- **Dependent:** A family member who is under 18 years of age or an individual of any age who has a disability or is a full-time student. The following individuals can never be dependents: the head of household, spouse, co-head, foster children/adults, and live-in aides.
- **Household:** A household includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status:
  - A single person,
  - A group of persons residing together. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - A married member and their spouse,
    - A family with or without dependent(s), or
      - A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family,
      - Unborn children and children in the process of being adopted are considered family members for purposes of determining bedroom size,

- Child (a minor) by birth, adoption, a court order establishing custody, or a legal order from the social service agency (e.g., Department of Child Safety),
    - The co-head of household is an individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the head of household. A co-head never qualifies as a dependent. The co-head must have legal capacity to enter into a lease and must also meet AHCCCS eligibility requirements.
- A household does not include:
  - A housekeeper or live-in aide,
  - Foster children and/or foster adults,
  - A group of unrelated persons living together (e.g., friends, etc.),
  - Aunt, uncle, sister, brother, cousin, friend, etc., or
  - An additional family to the household, (e.g., a sister and her children, etc.).

Each household must identify the individuals to be included in the household at the time of application and must notify the AHCCCS Housing Administrator if the household's composition changes any time after an AHP application has been submitted or the individual is participating in AHP.

- **HUD Continuum of Care:** The Continuum of Care (CoC) program promotes community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The program provides funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness. The program promotes access to and effects utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families.
- **Foster Children and Foster Adults:** Foster adults are usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)]. Foster children and foster adults that are living with an applicant or resident family are considered household members but not family members. The income of foster children/adults is not counted in family annual income and foster children/adults do not qualify for a dependent deduction [24 CFR 5.603 and HUD-50058 IB, pp. 13-14].
- **FFS:** Fee for Service
- **Gender Identity:** Actual or perceived gender characteristics
- **GMHSUD:** General Mental Health/Substance Abuse Disorder
- **Guest:** For the purposes of AHP A guest is defined as a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant.
- **Head of Household:** The family may designate any qualified adult family member as the head of household. The head of household must have the legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law and is responsible for ensuring that all household members comply with the duties of the tenancy. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as head of household.
- **Homeless(ness):** See Eligibility section
- **HUD:** The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Independent Community Housing:** A setting where member can live in a home, apartment, or allowable housing without on-going daily supervision from behavioral health providers. Independent community housing is the primary housing type for Permanent Supportive Housing and subsidy programs in the AHP.

- **Institution (or Mainstream Institution):** Shelter, room and board or housing provided by mainstream entities, or their contractors related to treatment or incarceration. Examples include but are not limited to jail or prison, inpatient or residential behavioral health or substance abuse treatment programs, hospitalization, or foster care settings. For purposes of AHP eligibility, AHCCCS will consider Behavioral health transitional or substance abuse programs with average stays of less than 90 days as “institutions.”
- **Institutional Releases:** Includes individuals exiting an institution as defined above and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution and who lack a safe, sustainable housing destination for discharge.
- **Live-In Aide:** Live-in aide means a person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who: 1) is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons, 2) is not obligated for the support of the persons, and 3) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services [24 CFR 5.403].
  - The AHP must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR 8, to make the program accessible to and usable by a family member with disabilities.
  - A live-in aide is a member of the household, not the family, and the income of the aide is not considered in income calculations [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)]. Relatives may be approved as live-in aides if they meet all of the criteria defining a live-in aide. However, a relative who serves as a live-in aide is not considered a family member and would not be considered a remaining member of a tenant family.
- **MCO:** Managed Care Organization, also referred to as a health plan
- **Member:** An individual who is enrolled in an AHCCCS health plan. For AHP purposes, members do not have to be members as long as they meet the program eligibility requirements (e.g., SMI designation)
- **Non-Title XIX/XXI:** State and other funding not related to Medicare (Title XIX of the Social Security Act) or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) (Title XXI of the Social Security Act). For AHP, Non-Title XIX/XXI funding is primarily State General SMI Housing and Supported Housing funds.
- **PATH (Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness):** Federal and state funding grant funding for contractors who provide outreach and serve as a point of contact for food, clothing, water, blankets, shelter, and other basic living skills individuals require to reduce homelessness. This aids to enrollment by providing assistance for obtaining medical records, picture IDs, social security cards, etc. PATH funding also allows for affordable housing options and conducting outreach and in-reach to adults 18 and over who are chronically homeless and have a Serious Mental Illness designation.
- **Participant:** For AHP, a participant is any individual who may be eligible for, applied for, or who is currently in the AHP program including those on waiting lists, searching for housing, or currently receiving AHP subsidies or housing services.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Supportive housing links decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing with flexible, voluntary support services designed to help the individual or family stay housed and live a more productive life in the community. There is no time limitation, and tenants may live in their homes as long as they meet the basic obligations of tenancy. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of living in the housing. Housing affordability is ensured either through a rent subsidy or by setting rents at affordable levels.

- **Person(s) with a Disability: [24 CFR Part 8.3 and 100.201]**

For the purposes of this Guide, AHCCCS utilizes the Federal Civil Rights law definition of an individual with disability. A person with a disability is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, or
- Has a record of such impairment, or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

Disability Sub-Definitions:

- The phrase “physical or mental impairment” includes but is not limited to:
  - Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic or disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
  - Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term “physical or mental impairment” includes but is not limited to such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism.
  - Major Life Activities includes, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, and/or working.
  - Impairment (or has a record of impairment) means having a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but is treated by a public entity as constituting such a limitation; has none of the impairments defined in this section but is treated by a public entity as having such an impairment; or has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, only as a result of the attitudes of others toward that impairment.
  - The definition of a person with disabilities does not include:
    - Current illegal drug users;
    - People whose alcohol use interferes with the rights of others;
    - Persons who objectively pose a direct threat or substantial risk of harm to others that cannot be controlled with a reasonable accommodation under the HCV program.

The above definition of disability determines whether an applicant or member is entitled to any of the protections of federal disability civil rights laws. Thus, a person who does not meet this disability is not entitled to a reasonable accommodation under federal civil rights and fair housing laws and regulations.

- **Public Housing Authority (PHA):** a government entity authorized to administer HUD housing programs
- **Referral:** Housing Administrator’s process of selecting eligible housing applicants from the waitlist and matching them with appropriate housing opportunity.
- **Transitional Housing (TH):** a shelter or housing program that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons or other designated populations to facilitate movement to independent living. The housing is short-term, typically less than 24 months. In



addition to providing safe housing for those in need, other services are available to help members become self-sufficient.

- **Qualified Representative:** for the purposes of these policies, a qualified representative may be: 1) any licensed health or behavioral health worker; or 2) a non-licensed health or behavioral health worker with direct support, oversight and or knowledge of the member's circumstances which includes their housing needs and situation, individualized service plan and history, service needs or discharge status from an inpatient, jail or treatment institutional setting.
- **SAMHSA:** The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a branch of the United States Department of Health and Human Services
- **Scattered Site:** A program in which the tenant identifies and leases housing in any property in the community. The tenant is directly responsible to the owner of the property and AHP provides a monthly subsidy to pay for the unit rent. This program is comparable to the HUD Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program, but with modifications to meet the needs of adults with a Serious Mental Illness or GMHSU designation with High Cost/High Needs.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A person's sexual identity or self-identification as homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual, etc.
- **Serious Mental Illness (SMI):** A condition as defined in A.R.S. § 36-550 diagnosed in persons 18 years and older.
- **SMI Housing Trust Fund:** Non-Title XIX/XXI State Funding defined by ARS § 41-3955.01, administered by AHCCCS for, "housing projects and rental assistance for seriously mentally ill persons". Up to 10% of annual funding may be appropriated to AHCCCS for the purpose of administering the SMI Housing Trust Fund.
- **Supportive Housing Services:** Services, as defined in the AHCCCS Behavioral Health Services Guide, which are provided to assist individuals or families to obtain and maintain housing in an independent community setting including the person's own home or apartments and homes that are owned or leased by a subcontracted provider. These services may include but are not limited to case management, assistance with housing search and lease up processes, assistance with understanding lease and housing documents, daily living skills, employment and income assistance, budgeting, connection to natural supports, transportation, crisis planning, and substance abuse treatment, behavioral health services and assistance with accessing community resources. Many of these services are Medicaid reimbursable for eligible members. Many of these services may also be provided in the member's housing setting.
- **Transition Requiring Housing Placement:** Discharge from an institution, program, or facility that is required to provide or arrange housing upon release (e.g., crisis stabilization unit, detox facility) and without adequate long-term sustainable safe housing.

**APPENDICES****Appendix A  
AHP Application Guide****AHCCCS Housing Program Application Guide**

The AHCCCS Housing Program is administered by Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation (ABC) and HOM Inc. All applications and waitlist questions may be directed to ABC. The following will guide you through the application process and provide contact information for further questions.

**Step 1: Determine Eligibility**

To apply for housing assistance through the AHCCCS Housing Program (AHP), the member must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be a member with an SMI or GMHSU (T19/Medicaid eligible) designation
2. Be a United States citizen or have eligible immigrant status
3. Be at least 18 years old
4. Have an identified homeless or housing need documented by the member's clinical provider or treatment team.

**Step 2: Assure the referring agency is approved by AHCCCS**

If the member meets the eligibility criteria, the member along with an approved representative must complete the AHP Application Form. An approved representative must be a staff member at a behavioral health provider, including the agencies below:

1. AHCCCS Managed Care Organizations including ACC, ACC-RBHAs, and ALTCS-EPD in coordination with providers
2. AHCCCS Managed Care Organization (MCO) contracted providers, including but not limited to, health homes, behavioral health providers, SMI clinics/BH health homes, and integrated clinics.
3. American Indian Health Program providers for applicable Fee for Service members
4. Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (TRBHAs)
5. Tribal ALTCS
6. Indian Health Service facilities
7. Tribally owned or operated 638 facilities
8. PATH Team

**Step 3: Complete the Application**

The AHP Application Form is a fillable PDF which collects the minimal needed information for placement on the AHP waitlist. The member's approved representative is responsible for determining housing need. The approved representative will indicate on the application form which of three following housing needs applies to the member:

- **Actual Homelessness:** An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

- **Institutional or Housing Discharge:** a person exiting an institution who is likely to be homeless
- **Other Identified Housing Need:**
  - Fleeing domestic violence
  - Frequent hospitalization
  - Housing instability

More information on these specific types of housing need may be found in the AHCCCS PSH Guidebook. The form must also indicate the member's choice of housing type, geographic service area (GSA), county preference, and other special housing type needs. Special housing types vary by GSA and county, see special housing types by location on page three for the most updated resources.

The approved representative will give information to the member regarding the different housing types so the member may make an informed decision. The application also includes a release of information (ROI) to be signed by the member giving the Housing Administrator permission to request housing program eligibility related documentation.

#### **Step 4: Send completed application packet to Housing Administrator**

An application packet includes the completed application form, ROI, and identification documentation. Picture ID and Social Security Card are not required for submission but is helpful if the documentation is readily available at the time of application.

The approved representative will email the application packet to [ahpapplications@azabc.org](mailto:ahpapplications@azabc.org). Once received, the sender and member (if email is provided) will receive an email confirmation, within 1-2 business days, that the application packet was received, and member has been placed on the AHP waitlist.

#### **Step 5: Provide follow up documentation**

If any further documentation is required, it will be requested within the confirmation email. Based on the application, the Housing Administrator may request the following documentation to determine prioritization.

- VI-SPDAT score and documentation
- Verification of Homelessness

Requested documentation should be submitted to the Housing Administrator within 30 days of request. After the documentation is received, a second confirmation email will be sent.

#### **After the Application is Submitted**

- All approved applications will remain on the AHP waitlist until one of the following situations occur:
  - Member is enrolled in AHP housing program in either SS or CLP.
  - Member reports their housing needs have been met.
  - When member is contacted by Housing Administrator on multiple occasions for program enrollment and does not respond.
- The Housing Administrator will never remove a member without contacting the member and the referring agency.
- If there are any questions, including but not limited to a member's waitlist status, you may contact ABC at [AHPPApplications@azabc.org](mailto:AHPPApplications@azabc.org)

**Special Housing Types By GSA*****Northern Arizona***

Re-Entry, youth ages 18-26, 12 hour and 24 hour staffed, designated sex offender, SUD

***Southern Arizona***

None

***Central Arizona***

ACT Housing, Polydipsia, transitioned aged youth, medically compromised diabetes, sterile environment, 24 hour staffed

**Appendix B  
AHP Application Form**



***Housing Application  
AHCCCS Housing Programs***

**APPLICANT INFORMATION (ALL FIELDS MUST BE COMPLETED)**

Last Name:		First Name:		Middle Initial:	Gender:	Social Security Number:
Phone Number:		Second Phone Number:		Email Address:		
Do you use any other Social Security Number or Name(s)? No Yes SSN: Name(s):					Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY):	
Are you a citizen of the U.S? Yes No		AHCCCS ID Number:		Application Type: New Transfer		Designation: SMI GMH/SU & T19
Are you a veteran? Yes No		Please write in your Health Plan name (No Acronyms):				
Race – Check All that Apply					Ethnicity	
White		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		
Black or African American		Other		Non-Hispanic		
American Indian/Native Alaskan						
Please check which region in AZ you would like to live:			Please check one or both Housing Types you wish to apply to:			
Northern Arizona Central Arizona Southern Arizona			Scattered Sites (SS) Community Living Program (CLP) <b>(SMI Only)</b> <i>(check all that apply)</i> Shared Housing Independent Housing ACT Housing <u>With</u> Service Supports Specialty Location (Central AZ Only), if so list type:			
Will family members be living in the household Yes No			# of adults:		# of children:	
List AZ county preference:						

**REFERRING AGENCY**

BH Clinic/Health Home Agency Name:	BH Clinic/Health Home Site:	BH Clinic/Health Home Address:
Case Manager Name:	Phone Number:	Email Address:
Clinical Coordinator or Housing Specialist:	Phone Number:	Email Address:

<b>Identified Housing Need to be completed by approved representative:</b>
Actual Homelessness
Institutional or Hospital Discharge
Other Identified Housing Crisis, please specify:
Fleeing domestic violence
Frequent hospitalization
Housing instability

**All applications and questions can be sent to [AHApplications@azabc.org](mailto:AHApplications@azabc.org).**

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency Rep Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency Rep Title: \_\_\_\_\_