

448 – HOUSING PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATES: 07/01/16, 10/01/21

APPROVAL DATES: 07/01/16, 07/01/21

I. PURPOSE

This Policy applies to ACC, ALTCS E/PD, DES/DDD (DDD), and RBHA Contractors. This Policy specifies the scope of programs and activities included within AHCCCS Housing Program (AHP) services, duties of the Contractor, and the AHCCCS Housing Administrator related to coordination and delivery of supportive housing programs including AHP programs, and the process for development, implementation and management of housing programs and related funds for the eligible populations through the Arizona Serious Mental Illness Housing Trust Fund (SMI HTF).

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy:

HOUSING REFERRAL

The selection of a prioritized eligible member from the housing waitlist for an available voucher or site-based vacancy. At referral, the AHCCCS Housing Administrator will verify application information and eligibility. The form, format and process for housing referrals and subsequent search and placement processes for referred members shall be determined by the AHCCCS Housing Administrator and described in the AHCCCS Housing Guidebook.

**NON-TITLE XIX/XXI
STATE GENERAL FUND
ALLOCATIONS**

State General Fund appropriations made to AHCCCS that provide Non Medicaid funding for housing and related supports primarily for persons determined SMI. These funds are the core of the AHP and consist of the SMI General Fund and the Supportive Housing appropriations. While both can serve persons determined SMI, the Supportive Housing funds may also serve Medicaid eligible members identified with General Mental Health or Substance Use Disorders (GMH/SUD).

Additional definitions are located on the AHCCCS website at: [AHCCCS Contract and Policy Dictionary](#).

III. POLICY

This policy covers both the AHCCCS Housing Program (AHP) and the AHCCCS Acquisition, Construction, and/or Renovation Program that are funded through Non-Title XIX/XXI State General Fund allocations.

A. AHCCCS HOUSING PROGRAM

AHP program elements will be managed under the contracted AHCCCS Housing Administrator. Funded by Arizona State funding sources, Non-Title XIX/XXI Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Housing General Fund and Non-Title XIX/XXI Supported Housing General Fund (Refer also to AMPM Policy 320-T2), AHP includes the following program elements:

1. Scattered Site Program – AHP funds utilized to provide housing subsidy vouchers to allow members to identify and lease housing in community. The program serves individuals determined SMI as well as General Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder (GMH/SUD) members.
2. Community Living Program – AHP funds used to provide rental subsidies in fixed site purchased with AHCCCS funds (e.g., SMI Housing Trust Fund (HTF) as specified in A.R.S. § 41-3955.01 to house individuals determined SMI) or block leased units for persons determined SMI. CLP includes some specific units for special populations, on-site services or dedicated to members also participating in intensive service programs (e.g., Assertive Care Teams [ACT]).
3. Bridge to Permanency Programs – AHP supports special collaborative programs with local Housing Authorities or other housing subsidy voucher programs to provide short term rental subsidy while the member applies for and secures permanent voucher for long term/permanent housing subsidy through the Housing Authority or housing subsidy voucher program.
4. Eviction Prevention and Housing Support Activities – AHP funding can provide limited support for other housing related expenses beyond Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) 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.
5. Special Projects – AHP supports partnerships to provide operational support and/or administrative funding to support Continuum of Care (COC), Public Housing Authority partnerships, Temporary Housing Assistance Program (THAP), or other housing subsidy programs that may be managed by the AHCCCS Housing Administrator.

B. AHCCCS HOUSING ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND/OR RENOVATION PROGRAM

The AHCCCS Housing Acquisition and/or Renovation Program is funded by AHCCCS SMI HTF funds and provides State funding for the purchase and/or renovation of properties (e.g., house, condominium, duplex, apartment, new construction). Eligible non-profit housing providers work with AHCCCS and the RBHA Contractor to locate properties, purchase, and/or renovate them for the use of individuals determined to have Serious Mental Illness following AHCCCS requirements, review, and approval. The property is held for use by AHCCCS members for an extended period of time through the use of filed Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions. If AHCCCS elects to deploy SMI HTF resources to support housing subsidies, SMI HTF funds shall be considered AHP funds and be administered through those processes.

1. The following conditions apply:
 - a. The RBHA Contractor shall administer the AHCCCS Housing Acquisition, Construction, and/or Renovation Program through subcontracts or partnerships with non-profit entities that have the capacity, experience, and knowledge of low-income housing programs, available funding streams and resources for PSH for adults determined to have SMI, and other eligible populations served by the Contractor (contingent upon available funding),
 - b. The RBHA Contractor shall have prior approval from AHCCCS if the property purchase and related approved costs are to be reimbursed with funds provided through AHCCCS, and for acquisition and/or renovation of real property purchased by the Contractor's subcontractors with funds provided by AHCCCS, excluding net profits earned under the contract, the Contractor shall complete the following:
 - i. The AHCCCS Housing Application for Acquisition and/or Renovation or New Construction,
 - ii. All required documents to identify the funding source(s) used and the financial viability and sustainability of the project, prior to the purchase of any new property leveraged with funds provided through AHCCCS, and when applicable, a Notice of Real Property Transaction, which shall include the following:
 - 1) Copies of the AHCCCS Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) recorded with the County Recorder's Office. The CC&Rs will cover a period of extended as indicated in the CC&R table based on use and costs,
 - 2) The funding source(s) used to purchase the property, specifically whether the purchase is to be made with funds provided through AHCCCS and/or other matched funds,
 - 3) The financing arrangements made prior to purchase the property,
 - 4) Prior approval from AHCCCS if the property purchase and related approved costs are to be reimbursed with funds provided through AHCCCS,

- 5) A deed containing the use restrictions and covenants, conditions, or restrictions that ensures the property is used solely for the benefit of members and that failure to comply with the use restrictions allows the State to take title to the property or otherwise enforce the restrictions, and
 - 6) All other pertinent documents as required by AHCCCS.
- iii. The Contractor or its subcontractors shall comply with AHCCCS program integrity requirements. The Contractor and/or its subcontractors shall not be or have:
- 1) Sanctioned by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA),
 - 2) Excluded by List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE),
 - 3) Convictions, sanctions, debarments or other legal restrictions related to their provision of health care or housing services or ability to perform the project scope of work, or
 - 4) Have debt or owe funds to AHCCCS, the Contractor, or Medicaid due to prior performance issues.
- iv. AHCCCS requires that the Contractor adopt the AHCCCS Housing Acquisition, and/or Renovation, or New Construction Operating and Funding Agreement as minimum requirements for all agreements for Housing Acquisition and/or Remodel or New Construction made between the Contractor using State Funds.

Refer to AHCCCS Housing Program Guidebook and Operations Manual found on the AHCCCS website under Resources, AHCCCS Guides – Manuals – Policies for information related to requests, AHCCCS approvals, and use of SMI Housing Trust Funds for the acquisition, construction, and/or rehabilitation of housing for individuals designated SMI.

2. Limitations or Restrictions for AHP and the AHCCCS Housing Acquisition, Construction, and/or Renovation Program specified herein **do not** include or cover:
 - a. Any licensed behavioral health residential or other long-term care facilities or room and board charges in residential treatment settings, or
 - b. Grant funded housing programs, or housing funds provided directly to the TRBHAs. AHCCCS does receive grant funding that may provide housing subsidy or assistance, however, grant related housing funding standards are guided by, and subject to eligibility standards and processes included in the respective grant agreements. (Refer to AMPM Policy 320-T1), and
 - c. AHP funding shall not be used to acquire or provide furniture.

C. DUTY OF PARTIES

AHCCCS is responsible for the overall oversight, fund distribution, operation, and ensuring that AHP funds are utilized for their intended purposes and in compliance with

all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. To achieve these goals, AHCCCS utilizes a statewide Housing Administrator to manage and operate the AHP. The Housing Administrator duties and obligations are defined in its contract terms and are outlined in the AHCCCS Housing Program Guidebook and Operations Manual.

D. CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Contractor, through its providers, is responsible for assisting and supporting members to secure and maintain housing as part of overall physical and behavioral health service provision. This includes coordination with the AHCCCS Housing Administrator for AHP programs if eligible, as well as other community based housing and programs (e.g., Housing Choice Vouchers, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) COC programs).
2. To adequately support members housing needs, the Contractor and its providers shall:
 - a. Ensure identification, assessment, screening, and documentation of individuals that have housing needs including homelessness, housing instability, or adequate and appropriate setting at discharge from residential, crisis or inpatient facility. It may also include administration of any AHCCCS approved standardized assessment tools that include housing evaluation,
 - b. Coordinate with the AHCCCS AHP Housing Administrator and contracted providers to identify and refer members identified with high need for housing (e.g., high needs/high cost, risk rosters),
 - c. Assist members to identify, apply and qualify for housing options they may be eligible for including AHP subsidies and supports as well as other mainstream affordable and PSH programs (e.g., HUD Housing Choice Vouchers, HUD McKinney Vento COC grants), to ensure a range of housing settings and programs are available to individuals consistent with the individual's recovery goals, individual's service plan, choice and offer the least restrictive environment necessary to support the member. Shelters, hotels, and similar temporary living arrangements do not meet this expectation,
 - d. Require providers, including an individual's treatment team or care coordinator, to participate and support AHP and other mainstream housing processes including assistance in securing eligibility documentation, attending housing briefings to ensure tenant understand housing rights, duties and processes, assist in housing search and lease up process help with move in and ongoing requirements (e.g., lease renewal),
 - e. Whenever possible, not actively refer or place individuals in a homeless shelter, licensed Supervisory Care Homes, unlicensed board and care homes, or other similar facilities upon discharge from an institutional setting,
 - f. For individuals enrolled in AHP housing, provide coordination between the housing provider, AHCCCS Housing Administrator, and clinical teams to ensure members receive appropriate wraparound supportive services to ensure housing

- stability and progress towards case plan goals. This may include delivery of services within the individual's housing placement as appropriate,
- g. Ensure coordination of services and housing for all eligible members including those from other systems of care (e.g., Fee for Services) as appropriate to ensure members have access to housing programs and services,
 - h. Demonstrate that the Contractor's staff and provider housing program staff have received training, demonstrated competency and utilized evidence based practices to coordinate housing based supportive services to assist individuals in attaining and maintaining permanent housing placement and retention,
 - i. Contractor and contracted providers shall demonstrate they can capably conduct and utilize any AHCCCS-required current or emerging standardized assessment tool for assessing and documenting housing needs such as the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) or other AHCCCS approved acuity tool,
 - j. Maintain (and ensure its contracted providers maintain) a sufficient number of dedicated staff of housing professionals with knowledge, expertise, experience, and skills, to coordinate with the AHCCCS Housing Administrator and providers to expedite housing processes,
 - k. Participate in the local HUD COC 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. Examples and suggested HMIS coordination requirements are included in the plan contracts,
 - l. Collaborate with State, County and local government agencies to support homeless and housing initiatives to resolve issues, develop new housing capacity, and address barriers to housing that affect members,
 - m. Work with providers and community partners to identify potential housing projects and assist providers with submission of applications and process to secure AHCCCS Acquisition, Construction and Renovation grants to expand housing capacity for persons designated SMI,
 - n. (RBHA only) Monitor housing providers for compliance with requirements of the SAMHSA Fidelity Monitoring as required. Provision of required housing specific data will require coordination with AHCCCS Housing Administrator,
 - o. Develop and make available to the providers policies and procedures regarding specific housing coordination and related requirements, and ensure all services including housing supports are provided in a culturally competent manner and do not intentionally or unintentionally discriminate, and
 - p. Work with providers and community to identify new projects for possible SMI HTF application to AHCCCS to expand housing capacity for individuals determined SMI.

E. AHCCCS HOUSING PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the Contractor and its providers to be aware of AHP eligibility requirements and ensure that all members referred for AHP housing are eligible.

1. The Contractor and/or its provider shall verify eligibility upon issuance of housing support or renewal of the housing support.
2. The Contractor shall establish and publish processes verifying eligibility upon issuance of housing support or renewal of the housing support.
3. The AHCCCS Housing Administrator shall work with the Contractor and AHCCCS to establish processes and required documentation for establishing eligibility.
4. Eligibility Criteria:
 - a. AHP housing eligibility requirements shall be consistent with any requirements and restrictions established by the appropriation or allocation of the funding from the legislature or AHCCCS,
 - b. The Contractor shall ensure that members referred for AHP Housing Assistance meet the eligibility criteria established as follows. The member applying for AHP housing shall:
 - i. Be at least 18 years old and legally able to enter into a binding lease or housing contract at the time of referral to AHP housing. A legally emancipated minor under the age of eighteen may qualify for AHP housing services or subsidy if they also met the other AHP criteria including mental health status,
 - ii. Have lawful presence in the United States pursuant to A.R.S. § 1-502,
 - iii. Be:
 - 1) Determined Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI), or
 - 2) Be identified with a GMH/SUD and be considered High Needs/High Cost (HNHC), and Title XIX eligible.
 - iv. Have an identified and documented housing need by a Contractor or provider. A “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 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 setting other 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 two of the following indicators:
 - a) Appropriate Z Code of “homelessness” or “housing instability” in medical record,
 - b) Housing need assessed and identified in AHCCCS approved evidence based assessment tool that includes Housing assessment,
 - c) Inclusion on Contractor High Risk Roster/ High needs/High Cost List
 - d) Housing is needed to “prevent disease, disability or other adverse conditions of progression, or to prolong life”,
 - e) Permanent Housing and subsidy identified in an individual’s service plan,
 - f) Member self-attestation of homelessness, or housing insecurity,
 - g) Prior or repeated past history of homelessness, evictions or housing instability (three or more episodes in past 12 months or less) 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), and
 - h) 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.