WHAT IS RAPID REHOUSING (RRH) & WHY DOES IT WORK?

The United States Government department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) defines Rapid Rehousing as an “Intervention informed by the Housing First approach which rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services.

Why it Works?

- Rapid rehousing helps families and individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters solve practical and immediate challenges to obtaining permanent housing.

- Reduces the amount of time an individual may experience homelessness.

- Links individuals to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long-term.
ACT’S ROLE IN RAPID REHOUSING IN CT

Who is ACT?
ACT is a statewide (Connecticut) non profit organization that provides a variety of services that ensure that all people impacted by HIV/AIDS and related health issues have access to health, housing and support services. ACT is the main fiduciary for all of the Department of Housing’s (DOH) Rapid Rehousing funds. HUD awards funds to the DOH for various purposes and populations. RRH is one of many projects managed by DOH.

ACT’s Role
There are various programs across the state of Connecticut that provide Rapid Rehousing Services. Once a client is connected to one of these programs they will work with a Case Manager or Housing Specialist to identify an apartment that is suitable for their needs. The Case Manager will assist the client in completing the required set of documentation. Once these documents are collected they’re submitted to the ACT Rapid Rehousing team for further processing.
WHAT IF MY CLIENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY INCOME?

A part of Case Manager's intake process should include an assessment of the client's current income. However, income is not a requirement.

If the client does not have any income, the Case Manager should use the Rapid Rehousing Zero Income Affidavit form which should be submitted to ACT with all other required documentation.
DATA SHARING THROUGH CASEWORTHY: HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HMIS)

What is Homeless Management Information System?

A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

Is the Client’s Information Protected?

The name and any identifying information of the client and members of their family are redacted to protect the client’s privacy and ensure safety of the household. i.e. names, birthdates, SS#, address, etc.

How Is this database used to assist RRH clients?

Using the client’s unique HMIS identifier, ACT will enter service data to complete a request. When enrolling a client in the database, no identifying information is added to HMIS.
WHAT DO I DO IF I’M HAVING ISSUES WITH HMIS?

Contact Nutmeg IT Help Desk:

Nutmeg IT Help Desk helpdesk@nutmegit.com
SUBMITTING INITIAL REQUEST FOR LEASE UP

What Forms Are Required?

1. *Income Verification
2. *IRS Form W9
3. Verification of Ownership
4. *Client Lease Agreement
5. VAWA Lease Addendum
6. *Rent Reasonableness
7. Housing Habitability Checklist
8. *Homelessness Verification
9. *HMIS Release of Information
10. Housing Stabilization Plan
11. Document Checklist
12. *HQS Inspection Form

Conditional Documents

1. RRH Exception Form
2. *Lead Form
3. *Costal Map if located in a coastal community
4. *Recertification

* = Currently required by H.U.D. (Covid Protocol)
The IRS Form is required by any individual who is a private contractor (an individual being paid for services i.e. rental fees). This form is used to verify the name of the rental unit's owner and their Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN).

**Common W9 Issues**

Some landlords have multiple companies and multiple EINs. If this information does not match a request cannot be processed:

- **W9 is unsigned by property owner**
- **TIN or EIN does not match IRS records**
Verification of ownership verifies who the appropriate person to be paid is. Most often, landlords will provide a copy of the deed or an IRS form proving that they own the unit being rented.

It is important that the information on the W9, verification of ownership, and the lease all match. Any conflicting information between these documents could potentially result in a delay in processing requests.
CLIENT LEASE AGREEMENT

The lease agreement should include property address & signatures from the landlord/ client. The lease should also include the timeframe of the client’s lease.

*All leases should be no more or less than 1 year.

Some landlords are reluctant to sign leases without initial payment. In this situation, requests will be approved on a case by case basis. However, subsequent request will require a signed lease.

*1 year lease term Waived during the Covid-19 Pandemic
The VAWA lease addendum ensures that there are protections in place for the tenant in the event they may experience a domestic violence situation. This form is required regardless of the client’s gender.

This form must be completed by anyone 18+ even if they’re not the head of household and is required regardless of the client’s gender.
Rent reasonableness is required by HUD for all Public Housing Agencies (PHAs).

Intent:
- Ensures that government funds are put to best use and rent falls within Fair Market Rate (FMR)
- Ensures equal opportunity in selection of high quality housing
- Protects subsidy funds from price gouging

### Rent Reasonableness Checklist and Certification

24 CFR 874.520 (a)(3) Rent reasonableness. The rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to rents currently being charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Proposed Unit</th>
<th>Unit #1</th>
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<th>Unit #3</th>
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<td>Gross Rent</td>
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<td>Handicap Accessible?</td>
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<td>Most Recently Charged Rent For Proposed Unit</td>
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I certify that I am not a HUD certified inspector and I have evaluated the property located at the above address to the best of my ability and find the following:

**CERTIFICATION:**

A. Compliance with Payment Standard

Contract Rent + Utility Allowance = Proposed Gross Rent

Approved Rent does not exceed applicable Payment Standard of $ __________

(Payment Standard is average of Unit #1 and #2, Most recently charged rent for Proposed Unit)

B. Rent Reasonableness

Based upon a comparison with rents for comparable unassisted units, I have determined that the proposed rent for the unit ______ IS ______ IS NOT reasonable.

Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________ Date: __________

* Other local resources may be used to obtain information e.g.: 
  1. Internet: [www.gpec.org/800.com/ iraas.org]
  2. Market surveys, classified ads, CT housing search listings (DCDD): [www.gpec.org/800.com/ iraas.org]
CT Rapid Rehousing Programs are designated for homeless individuals and families only.

The homelessness verification form must be completed at the time the initial application is submitted.

Client must meet HUD’S definition of literally homeless

The Case Manager must submit proof of homelessness (i.e. letter from shelter staff (not needed if the shelter enters data into HMIS) or a letter from outreach or unsheltered populations.)
CT Rapid Rehousing Programs are designated for homeless individuals and families only.

The homelessness verification form must be completed at the time the initial application is submitted.

Client must meet HUDS definition of literally homeless

The Case Manager must submit 3rd party proof of homelessness (i.e. letter from shelter staff or counselor or notarized letter).

Shelter program enrollment will not suffice as Homelessness Verification
HMIS RELEASE OF INFORMATION

The HMIS Release of Information allows ACT to input service data to process the client’s request for assistance.

All sections of form must be filled out and no blank lines may remain for document to be complete.
The RRH Exception form is used in the event a client has selected an apartment that is over the Fair Market Rate (FMR). In the event that this should happen, the program’s leadership staff should approve the request before it is submitted to ACT.

This form is also used in the event a client may need assistance for more than the standard 12 month length of the RRH program.
HOUSING STABILIZATION PLAN

The housing stabilization plan is essentially a service plan. The Case Manager will work with the client to identify goals and action steps they will work towards while in the RRH program.

By completing this form, the client will develop a long term strategy for maintaining their housing even after exiting the RRH program.
The Case Manager should utilize the document checklist to keep track of what has been completed and received from the client. This checklist must be submitted along with required request documents.
REOCCURRING REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

A funds request form is required for reoccurring requests. The FSR informs ACT’s finance department of the amount of rent that needs to be paid and who that rent is being paid to.

This should be uploaded into HMIS before emailing ACT about any reoccurring requests. The service request allows Case Managers to check the status of their request.
Recertification determines whether or not a client is still eligible for services as their situation may change from the time they initially applies for assistance. This form needs to be completed every 90 days from the time the client is initially approved.
IMPORTANT SERVICE REQUEST FORM FIELDS

Enrollment
The program that the client is enrolled into (i.e. YHDP, ESG ODFC)
*The enrollment must match the provider in order to be processed

Service
What the service request is for. This includes rental assistance, security deposit

Payee
Is the Landlord to be paid. The payment portion of the FSR is important because its where the check will be mailed

Reference
Refers to the service type. For example, if the request is for April then the reference name would be “April’s Rent” or if it’s in initial request it would labeled “Aprils Initial Rent” or “April’s Initial Security Deposit”
AFTER DOCUMENTATION IS COLLECTED

All documentation for initial requests should first be submitted to ACT via email at Community_Assistance@Act-CT.Org. Emails should specify the type of application, month, year and HMIS ID of the client in the body or subject line. Any Case Manager planning to fax documentation should email first to advise that documentation is being sent over.

Once and initial request is approved, the Case Manager will submit a reoccurring request on a monthly basis.
IMPORTANT FSR FIELDS (CONT.)

**Reference Date**
The date the service request referring to

**Due Date**
The day the rent is due. Which is usually the first of the month. Ex: Aprils rent due date would be 04/01/2020

**Unit Quantity**
Should always be “1”, unless you are paying for additional months’ of security

I.E. the unit rate would be “2” if the client lease is requiring two months’ security.

**Unit Amount**
The actual amount of rent/security deposit
REQUEST STATUS

ACT has created a google spreadsheet to track initial and ongoing applications. When an Advocate submits a request, ACT will update the spreadsheet to reflect the status in real time requests can be listed as:

**Approved**

Once payment is made the RRH coordinator will go in and release the FSR and the status will change to Approval-Accepted.

**Pending**

Indicates that there is an issue. The Advocate will get an email from ACT RRH team advising of what is needed to move forward with processing.

**Rejected**

If your submission is rejected, it is because you have incorrectly submitted the application (missing type, HMIS, or month).
SUBMITTING REOCCURRING REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Reoccurring requests should be submitted before the 20th of every month to ensure timely payment of rent for the following month and should be emailed to

Community_Assistance@Act-CT.Org
RRH TICKETING SYSTEM PROVIDER WORKFLOW

Submitting Applications

Beginning with **October 2020** Rents

- Send only **ONE** email per HMIS ID
  
  - EMAIL ADDRESS: `community_assistance@act-ct.org`
  
  - Subject Line = HMIS ID + type of Application (Initial, Ongoing, Recert) + Month of assistance

- You will receive a confirmation email that your submission has been received and a ticket number will be automatically generated

- ACT Staff will assign your ticket to team member for review

- You will receive an email stating who your submission has been assigned to
RRH TICKETING SYSTEM PROVIDER WORKFLOW

If approved (no errors)

- When your submission has been reviewed and approved, you will receive another update that your submission has been forwarded to our finance department

If pending (errors/missing information)

- If your submission is pending, for whatever reason, you will receive an email that your submission is pending with detailed information requesting further information to complete the application
- You will receive an email every 48 hours until the information has been received

If Rejected Applications

Incorrectly submitted applications (no client ID/month/type of application) will be returned to sender and can be resubmitted
**FINAL STEPS/PAYMENTS**

If pending (errors/missing information)

- If there is a problem with the application: for example, TIN mismatch, FSR mismatch with W9, etc. you will receive an email with detailed information and your ticket will be placed in pending status.

- You will receive an email every 48 hours until the information has been received.

- When information is received, finance will review documentation, cut checks. Once payments are mailed, you will receive an update email stating that your ticket has been closed.

- ACT Staff will upload checks to HMIS & Release FSR.
FINAL STEPS/PAYMENTS

If approved (no errors)

- Finance will review documentation, cut checks. Once payments are mailed, you will receive an update email stating that your ticket has been closed
- ACT Staff will upload checks to HMIS & Release FSR
INITIAL REQUEST PROCESS FLOW (RRH,YHDP)

Ideal Timeline: Five Business Days

Case Manager (CM)/Housing Specialist (HS) emails single application to Community_Assistance@Act-CT.Org
- Subject Line = HMIS ID + type of Application (Initial, Ongoing, Recert) + Month of assistance

- CM/HS receives confirmation email with Ticket number.
- RRH Staff assigns application to processor

Completed Application delivered to Finance Department (CM/HS notified via email)

Finance Department verifies TIN® (new vendors)

Incomplete Application placed in pending status.
CM/HS contacted regarding missing/incorrect items

CM/CA makes corrections and contacts RRH Staff to notify items are completed/uploaded/uploaded to HMIS

TIN Mismatch/Illegible – Applicant is contacted and notified to contact landlord to obtain corrected documents

TIN Match: Checks are scanned and uploaded into HMIS. FSR released within 5 business days of mailing check. Applicant notified when check is mailed via email

Applicant is contacted and notified to contact landlord to obtain corrected documents

*TIN = Tax ID Number – if this number is incorrect, it can delay processing request. All TIN’s must match IRS Records
ONGOING REQUEST PROCESS FLOW (RRH, YHDP)

Case Manager (CM)/Client Housing Specialist (HS) submits request via HMIS & emails community_assistance@act-ct.org

- Subject Line = HMIS ID + type of Application (Initial, Ongoing, Recert) + Month of assistance

RRH Staff assigns application to processor and processes (recertification forms needed every 90 days)

Completed Application delivered to Finance Department. (CM/HS notified via email)

- Finance Department reviews, cuts check & mails to vendor.

Incomplete Application placed in pending status. CM/HS contacted regarding missing/incorrect items

CM/HS makes corrections and contacts RRH Staff to notify items are uploaded to HMIS (reply to ticket thread)

- Approval Checks are scanned and uploaded into HMIS. FSR released within 5 business days of mailing check

Ideal Timeline: Five Business Days
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR COVID-19

Paperwork Requirements for Initial Lease-Up

Until the State of CT lifts the Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency enacted by Governor Lamont on March 10, 2020, the following paperwork will be required:

- Rapid Re-Housing Fund Request Checklist (page 1 only)
- Homeless Verification
- HQS Inspection
- If in a coastal community, complete the CBRS Map
- Rent Reasonableness Checklist
- Lead Disclosure
- Lease
- Landlord W-9
- (YHDP) DOB Documentation
- Complete program enrollment in HMIS (“Statewide ESG Emergency Rapid Exit”)
- Complete Financial Service Request (FSR) in HMIS

**In the event that staff are required to work from home by their agency of employment, electronic signatures are acceptable.**
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR COVID-19

Exception Forms

For clients who are nearing their 1 year program enrollment anniversary, providers do not need to submit an Exception Form to continue to serve households with income at or below 50% AMI beyond 12 months. However, HUD continues to require that annual assessments (based on program enrollment date) be completed in HMIS and that annual HQS inspections be conducted for clients who are receiving rental assistance beyond.
ACT CONTACTS

Abreka Hawkins, Rapid Rehousing Coordinator
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Brennden Colbert, Rapid Rehousing Coordinator
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860-241-2437 x305

Melanie Alvarez, Director of Community Resources
MAlvarez@Act-CT.Org/RRH@Act-CT.Org
860-247-2437 x 316
RESOURCES

https://www.cceh.org/provider-resources/rapid-rehousing/

http://www.ctcadv.org/projects-initiatives/housing-advocacy/

https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/domestic-violence/

https://www.justice.gov/ovw


https://www.justice.gov/ovw/blog/transitional-housing-programs-and-empowering-survivors-

domestic-violence