



**STRATEGIES TO  
END HOMELESSNESS**

*Glossary of Commonly Used Terms*

in the Cincinnati / Hamilton County Homeless Services System

## *Terms and definitions*

**Central Access Point (CAP)** – The centralized intake system for families and individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless. CAP is staffed by highly skilled intake specialists who screen callers based on their immediacy of need and make appropriate referrals into partner agency emergency shelter, shelter diversion, or transitional housing programs. CAP accepts calls at (513) 381-SAFE (7233) from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday through Friday, and 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Saturday and Sunday.

**Chronically homeless** – An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition, or a family with at least one adult member who has a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, an individual or family must have been on the streets or in emergency shelters (i.e. not in transitional or permanent housing) during these episodes.

**Collaborative Applicant** – A single agency or organization designated by a Continuum of Care to be that Continuum's sole representative in grant applications to HUD. The collaborative applicant is the only entity that can apply for HUD grants for the Continuum that it represents. Strategies to End Homelessness serves as the Collaborative Applicant for the Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states and units of local governments.

**Consolidated Continuum of Care Application** – The annual grant application submitted by a Continuum of Care or its collaborative applicant to HUD to obtain funding for programs within the Continuum. This application encompasses all of the projects that the CoC plans to fund over the year and is scored by HUD against other CoC applications as part of the yearly CoC Program Competition.

**Consolidated Plan** – The Consolidated Plan (often called Con Plan for short) is a five-year housing and community development plan that is required of local governments by HUD. This is considered a strategic planning document and is an application for all of a jurisdiction's entitlement funding (e.g., Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA); it is also a tool for reporting goals and action plans that later are accounted for annually. There is an entire section within the Consolidated Plan dedicated to Special Needs housing that includes housing for the homeless. Both Cincinnati and Hamilton County have a Consolidated Plan. The Cincinnati and Hamilton County Consolidated Plans' sections on homelessness have been developed through the CoC special Consolidated Planning process; they are identical and function as our local plan to address chronic homelessness. All tables and charts of the Consolidated Plan are updated annually with the Continuum of Care application exhibits.

**Continuum of Care (CoC)** – A network of organizations designated by HUD to oversee homeless assistance grants from HUD in a particular geographic area. Each CoC coordinates with homeless assistance agencies in its area to produce annual plans identifying the needs of local homeless populations, the resources currently available in the community to address those needs, and any gaps in resources that could be filled with additional funding.

**Continuum of Care Board** – The group appointed to act on behalf of the Continuum of Care. The board is made up of representatives of organizations and programs serving the homeless within the CoC and includes at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. The Homeless Clearinghouse serves as the CoC Board for Cincinnati/Hamilton County.

**Continuum of Care Program** – The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and state and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families, while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The HEARTH Act consolidated Shelter Plus Care (SPC), Supportive Housing Grant (SHP) and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) into the CoC Program.

**Continuum of Care Program Competition** – Each year, Continuums around the country participate in the CoC Program Competition. This competition is the process through which HUD examines the conditions and outcomes of all Continuums, in order to determine the level of funding each will receive in the following year.

**Continuum Projects** – Projects which may or may not be HUD funded, that provide services and/or lodging, and whose primary purpose is to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness within the CoC's geography. All ESG and CoC Program-funded projects are Continuum Projects, but the system should also include all non-ESG and non-CoC Program funded projects dedicated to serving people who are homeless.

**Emergency Shelter** – A temporary place for homeless persons to reside. A stay in an emergency shelter is normally less than 90 days and averages 30 to 45 days. Emergency shelter provides a safe, decent alternative to the streets. Emergency shelters may be designed on a drop-in basis, where no intake is required and the goal is simply to provide an alternative to the streets for homeless persons, or it may be designed with intake and assessment requirements to assure the appropriate target population is in the right facility. All emergency shelters in Cincinnati must meet the Emergency Shelter Program Operation and Facility Accreditation Standards and are annually monitored for compliance by Strategies to End Homelessness.

**Emergency Shelter Program Operation and Facility Accreditation Standards** – The Emergency Shelter Program, Operations and Facility Standards were drawn and adapted from the Homeless to Homes plan and all emergency shelter facilities receiving public funding are expected to be in alignment with the City-approved recommendations. Strategies to End Homelessness monitors the facilities annually and reports to the City of Cincinnati Department of Trade and Development.

**Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)** –The Emergency Solutions Grant (formerly known as Emergency Shelter Grant) is federal grant funding to assist with street outreach, shelter, rapid re-housing assistance, homelessness prevention, HMIS and administration. The change in the program’s name, from Emergency Shelter Grants to Emergency Solutions Grants, reflects the change in the program’s focus from addressing the needs of homeless people in emergency or transitional shelters to assisting people so they can quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. State governments, cities, counties, and U.S. territories receive ESG funds and make these funds available to eligible sub-recipients, which can be either local government agencies or private nonprofit organizations. Sub-recipients that want to operate the homeless assistance and/or homelessness prevention projects must apply for ESG funds through the governmental recipient, and not directly to HUD.

**High Performing Community** – A term used by HUD to designate those communities whose programs have average shelter stays of less than 21 days and rates of returns to homelessness of less than 5%.

**HOME** – A HUD program that provides formula grants to states and units of local government that communities use –often in partnership with local nonprofit groups– to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people.

**Homeless** – Homeless persons are generally defined as those living in homeless facilities or in places not meant for human habitation. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) categorizes the homeless into four distinct groups:

1. *Literally homeless* – People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided. People exiting an institution are considered homeless under this category if they resided in the institution for 90 days or less and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.
2. *At imminent risk of being homeless* – People who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
3. *Homeless under other federal statute* – Unaccompanied youth or families with children who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state. This category applies to those who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.
4. *Fleeing domestic violence* – People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

**Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act** – Signed in to law by President Obama on May 20, 2009, the HEARTH Act amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes, including:

- A consolidation of HUD's competitive grant programs
- The creation of a Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program
- A change in HUD's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness
- A simplified match requirement
- An increase in prevention resources
- An increase in emphasis on performance

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** – A Homeless Management Information System is a congressionally-mandated, community-wide database system which collects shelter and service use data on the homeless. The Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC uses VESTA® as the local HMIS.

**Homeless To Homes** – A comprehensive plan for the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio to ensure single homeless individuals have access to appropriate shelter facilities and comprehensive services which facilitate their movement out of homelessness and into permanent housing. The development of the plan was overseen by Strategies to End Homelessness, and highlights of the plan include:

- Improved quality of services to move individuals out of homelessness quickly. The longer a person remains homeless, the harder it is to stabilize his/her housing.
- Targeted services specific to the individual's gender, age, or special needs, with reduced reliance on emergency shelter alone. Services such as case management, mental health assessment and intervention, substance abuse assessment and treatment, combined with shelter, to end homelessness.
- An ambitious increase in various types of supportive housing, while maintaining current emergency shelter capacity.
- Recommendations that would make more strategic use of existing funding resources.

**Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** – The Federal program dedicated to the housing needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Under the HOPWA Program, HUD makes grants to local communities, states, and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

**Large Group Scoring** – The yearly process in which agencies in the Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC compete to receive program funding from HUD by having their programs prioritized by the CoC membership.

**Leverage** – The total value of cash and in-kind resources committed to making a CoC Program fully operational. The minimum amount required for HUD CoC grants is 150%.

**Match** – The amount of cash or in-kind contributions that an agency or program is required to contribute to the CoC Program. The amount required for HUD CoC grants is 25%.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** – is a United States federal law that provides federal money for homeless shelter programs. It was the first significant federal legislative response to homelessness, and was passed and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on July 22, 1987. The act has been reauthorized and amended several times over the years. The McKinney Act originally had fifteen programs providing a spectrum of services to homeless people, and is what originated almost all of the programs we are familiar with today, including the Continuum of Care Programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. The most recent reauthorization of the McKinney Act was through the HEARTH Act in 2009 (see HEARTH Act above).

**Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA)** – A Notice of Funding Availability is released in the Federal Register announcing all grant submission deadlines and requirements. The SuperNOFA is the Federal Register notice created by HUD to release multiple housing funding notices at the same time. The CoC grant funds are released through a NOFA annually.

**Permanent Housing (PH)** – Permanent Housing is community-based housing, the purpose of which is to provide housing without a designated length of stay. There are two types of Permanent Housing: Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing.

**Permanent Housing Bonus Funding** – A new area of funding created by HUD as a special incentive to promote development of a specific type of housing for the homeless (e.g. permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals or rapid re-housing for families).

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** – Service-enriched long-term housing for homeless persons with a disabling condition. All permanent supportive housing has some level of service designed to strengthen the homeless individual or family's ability to live independently and guide them to the appropriate self-sufficiency necessary to maintain independent living. Permanent supportive housing does not have a designated length of stay, and may exist in one building or in multiple scattered sites. It may also be limited to a portion of a complex or development project.

**Point in Time (PIT) Count** – A method of obtaining a count of the homeless population in a given community. A Point in Time count is a count of the number of homeless people, sheltered or unsheltered, on one particular day in the last week of January of each calendar year.

**Pre-score** – Score given to a program as part of the prioritization process of Large Group Scoring. Programs participating in Large Group Scoring are rated based on several pre-measured elements tied to the program's performance. The resulting pre-score is used in conjunction with a community ranking to determine a program's priority in receiving HUD funding.

**Project Application** – The annual application written by partner agencies requesting new or renewal grants for the year. Each application must pass a capacity review conducted by the HUD Field Office and is then sent to Washington to be either approved or rejected in its entirety.

**Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** – Rapid Re-Housing is a type of Permanent Housing designed to quickly transition individuals and families (with or without disabilities) experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Intensive case management along with short to medium term rental assistance is provided to households in RRH programs for no more than 24 months..

**Shelter Diversion** – The homelessness prevention program that provides case management, financial assistance, and legal assistance to those at imminent risk of entering an emergency shelter or residing in a place not meant for human habitation.

**Shelter Plus Care (SPC or S+C)** – A rental subsidy program to provide housing for homeless persons with disabilities. Rental subsidies operate under similar rules to Section 8 (i.e. 30% rent limits, housing quality indicators, etc.) but must be matched by an equal (and auditable) level of services for every dollar of housing provided. Funds may be used for site-based operating support or scattered-site housing rental. A unit of local government or Public Housing Authority must be the applicant for SPC and funds pass through the applicant to project sponsors (agencies that provide the housing and services). Locally, the applicant unit of local government is the City of Cincinnati. Effective FY 2012, the HEARTH Act consolidated the SPC, SRO and SHP programs into the CoC Program.

**Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless (SRO)** – This program provides for the acquisition, renovation and operating support of single room occupancy units for the homeless. The program must be administered through the Public Housing Authority (PHA), which locally is the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA). Effective FY 2012, the HEARTH Act consolidated the SPC, SRO and SHP programs into the CoC Program.

**Special Needs** – Within the HMIS system, 'special needs' are defined as "issues affecting the client's ability to find and maintain housing." Special needs does not indicate a formal diagnosis has been given to an individual but is an insight into the needs of the client to be used in determining which supportive services are most appropriate. Special needs in VESTA® include: alcohol abuse, drug abuse, mental illness, physical/sensory disability, developmental/cognitive disability, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, non-English speaking, illiteracy, migrant worker, and pregnancy (for women only).

**Street Outreach** – Programs that provide essential services for unsheltered persons who are sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. Services include emergency health or mental health care, engagement, case management, and services for special populations.

**Supportive Housing Program (SHP)** – This program provides funding for development, operation and services for transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, service only programs, and the Homeless Management Information System. Funding is applied for through the CoC and is contracted by HUD directly to the applicant agency. Effective FY 2012, the HEARTH Act consolidated the SPC, SRO and SHP programs into the CoC Program.

**Supportive Services Only (SSO)** – Projects that address the service needs of homeless persons. Projects are classified as this component only if the project sponsor is not also providing housing to the same persons receiving the services. SSO projects may be in a structure or operated independently of a structure, such as street outreach services.

**Transitional Housing (TH)** – Temporary housing for homeless persons to facilitate their movement from the streets or emergency shelters into permanent housing. Appropriate on-site supportive services necessary to facilitate that movement must be included to be considered transitional housing. Persons residing in transitional housing receive services designed to support future self-sufficiency and housing search/acquisition. Some transitional housing facilities serve specific sections of the population (e.g. substance abusers, veterans, families), and in such cases also provide for the special needs of their residents (e.g. substance abuse services, veterans support groups, family education). Transitional housing is time-limited for up to 24 months and may be provided in one structure or in multiple scattered sites.

**Unified Funding Agency (UFA)** – An agency designated by the community to receive direct grants from HUD and then distribute sub-grants to project sponsors. Strategies to End Homelessness currently serves as the collaborative applicant (see above) and has applied to serve as the Unified Funding Agency for the Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care.

**VESTA®** – VESTA® (Virtual Electronic Service Tracking Assistant) is the HMIS software utilized by the CoC. It is a locally developed product owned by The Partnership Center, Ltd. It serves the CoC as a product in compliance with Federal Data Standards for an HMIS, but also as a community-based software product designed to facilitate partnership and innovation.

**Victim Service Provider** – A private non-profit organization whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This term includes rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other programs. Victim Service Providers are prohibited by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) from contributing data to HMIS and instead must record data in a comparable database.

## *Acronyms*

<b>CAP</b> – Central Access Point	<b>OMB</b> – Office of Management and Budget
<b>CDAB</b> – Community Development Advisory Board	<b>PCL</b> – The Partnership Center, Ltd.
<b>CDBG</b> – Community Development Block Grant	<b>PH</b> – Permanent Housing
<b>CFR</b> – Code of Federal Regulations	<b>PIT</b> – Point in Time
<b>CMHA</b> – Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority	<b>PSH</b> – Permanent Supportive Housing
<b>CoC</b> – Continuum of Care	<b>RRH</b> – Rapid Re-Housing
<b>ESG</b> – Emergency Solutions Grant	<b>SHP</b> – Supportive Housing Program
<b>FAC</b> – Funding Advisory Committee	<b>SPC/S+C</b> – Shelter Plus Care
<b>FHP</b> – Family Housing Partnership	<b>SRO</b> – Single Room Occupancy
<b>HCRP</b> – Housing Crisis Response Program	<b>SSO</b> – Supportive Services Only
<b>HEARTH Act</b> – Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act	<b>SSVF</b> – Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families
<b>HIC</b> – Housing Inventory Chart	<b>STEH</b> – Strategies to End Homelessness, Inc.
<b>HMIS</b> – Homeless Management Information System	<b>TA</b> – Technical Assistance
<b>HOG</b> – Homeless Outreach Group	<b>TH</b> – Transitional Housing
<b>HOPWA</b> – Housing for Persons with AIDS	<b>TLRC</b> – Tax Levy Review Committee
<b>HTH</b> – Homeless to Homes	<b>USICH</b> – United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
<b>HQS</b> – Housing Quality Standards	<b>UFA</b> – Unified Funding Agency
<b>HUD</b> – United States Department of Housing and Urban Development	<b>VESTA®</b> – Virtual Electronic Service Tracking Assistant
<b>LGBT</b> – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender	<b>VASH</b> – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
<b>NAEH</b> – National Alliance to End Homelessness	<b>VAWA</b> – Violence Against Women Act
<b>NOFA</b> – Notice of Funding Availability	<b>YARH</b> – Youth At Risk of Homelessness
<b>ODSA</b> – Ohio Developmental Services Administration	<b>3CDC</b> – Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation

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Since 2007, Strategies to End Homelessness has led a comprehensive system of care to assist the homeless in Cincinnati/Hamilton County. Our promise is to end homelessness in our community. Working in partnership with 30 non-profit organizations, Strategies to End Homelessness coordinates a centralized emergency shelter hotline, homelessness prevention, street outreach, emergency shelter, and housing resources toward the goal of ending homelessness. Strategies to End Homelessness is funded in part by the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, is a United Way Agency Partner, and a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity.

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