

Decent, Safe, Affordable Housing

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Purpose

To ensure that clients are afforded viable, long-term housing options that they perceive to be safe and secure, and that fully restore their human right to housing.

Definitions

Chronically Homeless: Individuals experiencing homelessness for at least a year or repeatedly, while dealing with a disabling condition such as a mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.

Unsheltered Homelessness: People without a fixed address, sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation. It is crucial to realize that this term is used to differentiate between sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, promoting pushes for "quick-fixes" like shelters and sweeps. Terms like this de-incentivize future investments in long-term solutions and harm our clients.

Procedures

Safety in familiarity

People experiencing chronic or unsheltered homelessness often find safety in familiar environments, feeling more comfortable in encampments than in preferred housing options. Anything Helps believes transitions should occur at the client's pace, honoring household composition and location whenever possible. Utilize the client's support network to ease transitions.

Temporary should not be Permanent

Emergency shelters, intended to be short-term, average a stay of 255 days, with housing typically offered after nearly a year. This prolonged period in institutional settings leads nine out of ten people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to decline shelter offers. Anything Helps believes shelters are not safe or decent housing options and should be a last resort, not a first step.

Permanent should not be Temporary

PSH buildings often place the poor in disadvantaged areas and create unsuitable environments for recovery. As a result, 88% of our clients see PSH as transitional and request to move before their first lease ends. Anything Helps believes PSH buildings are not decent housing options and should only be prioritized over emergency shelters for chronically homeless clients.

Affordable Housing

Clients should not pay more than 30% of their income for housing. Subsidize rents through eligible entitlements, housing authority programs, or subsidized units. Enroll clients in utility discount programs, low-income internet and phone plans, and other government assistance programs.

Quality Standards

Ensure housing meets HUD quality standards with a unit inspection upon move-in. If clients prefer housing that doesn't meet these standards, inform them of any deficits before they sign the lease.