

HCF-HRF Guidelines 11-02-09

The Housing Contingency Fund

The Department of Mental Health Housing Contingency Fund was originally created in 1988. The fund continues to provide financial resources from the Agency of Human Services Department of Mental Health, for increased housing opportunity, expansion of temporary rental assistance, and financial supports related to improving access, for Vermonters with serious and persistent mental illness who are enrolled in the Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Program. The fund is for persons who are waiting for HUD Section 8 housing assistance or other longer term affordable housing support from projects developed by the Vermont Not for Profit Housing Development Sector.

Eligible uses of the HCF fund

A.-Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA) is for a more limited period of assistance and can be useful when a client is in a two or three bedroom shared apartment and there is CRT fewer than the full complement of tenants. This type of assistance is useful if the CRT client will be securing a more permanent affordable housing unit in less than six months.

B-Security and apartment set-up costs; Security deposit and or utility deposits or furnishings usually not to exceed \$2,000.00)

C -**Loan** permitted use when a client has the need for temporary limited financial assistance to fund a small arrearage that will improve capacity to remain housed independently.

D-Ongoing rent subsidy while the CRT client is on a Section 8 subsidy waiting list; The client pays no more than 50% of her income for housing and the HCF pays the remainder to the landlord. The purpose of this financial support is to insure that a client is able to afford the rent payment for the time period that they must wait for Section 8 or other affordable housing option. *(this requires a start date and end date to be filled in the Housing Fund reporting form)*

E.-Other One time only assistance less than \$1,800 for support other than those listed above. (If the assistance required is greater than \$1,800 contact DMH for prior approval)

Housing Recovery Funds

Eligible uses of the HRF fund

- Rental Assistance is recognized as the most viable method of maximizing the Recovery Housing Fund (HRF) *for those waiting to leave VSH or as a community support to prevent re-hospitalizations* and is the main focus of the fund.
- Flexibility is to be maintained in the HRF as it has been in the Housing Contingency Fund to prevent VSH hospitalizations, or to improve housing availability for persons exiting VSH.

Categorical Uses of the Recovery Housing Fund

Categories A thru E are defined just as they are in the HCF listed above. However when reporting on the DMH Housing fund reporting form the correct **Housing Program Checkbox** must be filled in as either **HCF** or **HRF**

- F. **Hospital Prevention** to include all reasonable and prudent practices that support CRT clients at risk of hospitalization. i.e. temporary out of residence placement for higher level of care with ongoing rental assistance maintained or additional or increased security deposits to satisfy landlord requirements that will maintain housing.
- G. **Hospital Step down** Similar to prevention efforts with a focus on flexibility to assist in a timely discharge for a consumer ready to leave VSH when discharge planners have made that assessment. To include temporary housing while a permanent unit becomes readied or available or increased security funds/risk pool set aside to satisfy landlord requirements.
- H. **One time only assistance** flexible use of the fund to accomplish either hospital prevention, step down, or to maintain someone in existing housing. When this amount exceeds \$1,800.00 prior approval from DMH is required.