

CARES Prioritization Policy

To assure compliance with HUD mandates, better manage use of limited funds, and assure those least likely to resolve homelessness on their own are served first, the West Central and North Dakota Continuums of Care have adopted the following prioritization policies for CARES.

I. Prevention

All designated CARES partners shall use the CoC Approved Prevention Screening Tool to target households who are most likely to enter homelessness without assistance AND direct households to the most appropriate funder.

A. ORDER OF PRIORITIZATION: After screening for funder criteria and agency capacity (availability of funding to assist new households), households will be selected in the following order:

- Vulnerability based on approved prevention tool:

Type of Agency/Program	Level of Acuity
Social Service Providers	High
	Medium
Churches/Mainstream Resources	Low

- Handling Ties: If two or more persons/households have equal vulnerability scores/criteria
 - Program mission/capacity: example, domestic violence, veterans, medical
 - Age: youth (under 26) or senior (55 or older)

B. PROCESS:

- a. If households are currently housed and will be homeless without intervention, screening tool will be administered.
- b. The tool is entered in HMIS (MN) or Google Docs (both MN & ND) for clients who have been screened and are awaiting referral to prevention funder.
- c. Applications will be reviewed bi-monthly at minimum
- d. **Offer:**
 - i. All clients will be notified within 7 business days of acceptance or denial
 - ii. Client choice should be provided when available and applicable (provided eligibility and prioritization criteria is met).
 - iii. Agencies must contact client a minimum of 3 times and wait at least one week before closing referral.
 - If client does not respond within time frame and 3 contacts they will be given a phone call or letter stating referral is closed.
 - If client returns after referral time frame has passed, they will need to re-apply or their application will be re-submitted.

- e. **Providers Right to Refusal:** Providers maintain the right to refuse a client if there has been past documented incidents working with that client where there was potential harm to the service provider or if there is documented conflict of interest (provider is relative of client, there is a lawsuit pending against client/agency).
 - Providers refusing clients must complete the CARES denial form and submit to CoC Coordinator within 3 days of service denial.
- f. **Verification of eligibility:** Projects are required to keep documentation eligibility for clients that enter into programs

II. Shelter

All designated CARES partners shall use the CoC Approved Shelter Screening Tool to target households who are most vulnerable AND direct households to the most appropriate shelter or motel voucher resource.

A. Process:

- a. If not already completed, conduct initial access screen and CARES diversion. The emergency shelter assessment should only be conducted on those who were triaged at an access site, which resulted in referring to emergency shelter resources, after attempts at diversion were unsuccessful.
- b. Once a household is identified as needing emergency shelter, the CoC approved Emergency Shelter Assessment must be used to prioritize emergency shelter resources.
- c. Enter assessment in Podio (Cass & Clay Counties only).
- d. When an opening occurs, fill voucher or bed/room according to order of priority.
- e. Due to the limited number and emergency nature of shelter beds, reasonable attempts should be made to contact a household, but regional planners shall have the discretion to move to the next household to ensure that no resources are being unused due to being unable to contact household.

NOTE on Shelter Eligibility: Shelter Eligibility is based on funder restrictions (domestic violence, youth) or target population preference (youth, singles, families, women, men). Preference restrictions are revised based on CoC or sub-regional planning needs.

B. Order of Priority: Emergency Shelters resources must fill open beds by the highest vulnerability. This includes Hotel vouchers and shelter bed openings. Assessments score on a range from 0-6, with 6 being the most vulnerable. After shelter eligibility and openings are determined, beds/rooms shall be filled in the following order:

- a. **Communities with limited demand** and resources must regionally identify how they would want to prioritize their resources. Example: Emergency Hotel vouchers can only be issued to those who score above a 4 on the emergency shelter assessment.
- b. **Communities who have high emergency shelter demand and/or who have had a wait list in the last 30 days** must prioritize based on the following.
 - i. Vulnerability score
 - ii. Length of time on the wait list
 - iii. Accessibility

III. Supportive Housing

All designated CARES housing programs must fill open units based on the Prioritization Policy which prioritizes supportive housing to households based on vulnerability, system use, client choice and local preferences. CARES utilizes the VI-SPDAT plus Preference Supplement (Client choice, local preference and additional program eligibility screening questions) as the primary source to determine priority, but also relies on case consulting and provider expertise to triage households when needed.

A. Process:

- a. When a housing opening occurs, agencies will notify the CARES Priority List Manager (PLM) within 3-days.
- b. The PLM will sort the CARES Priority list according to program eligibility, program type and score and provide the agencies with a list of households.
- c. Agencies will have up to 5-days to contact the household and make an offer.
 - i. Agencies must contact referrals a minimum of 3 times and unable to make contact, wait at least two weeks before closing the offer.
 - Agencies are responsible for assuring that attempts to contact referrals include: original assessor, case managers, email, phone, back-up phone, alternative contact.
 - Agencies must record attempts in HMIS or to report Priority List Manager if across CoC borders or non-HMIS agency.
 - If client does not respond within time frame and 3 contacts' they will be given a phone call or letter stating the offer is closed.
 - If client returns after the offer time frame has passed, they will need to update their contact information and will be placed back on the priority list.

- ii. Agencies have the right to refuse to make an offer if there is a conflict of interest or if there is a safety concern. CARES staff must be notified within 3-days of a denial.
- d. Households have the right to refuse any referral, but must document why they refused and must meet with the CARES staff after 3 denials, to be placed back on the Priority List.
- e. If not already complete, agencies must verify eligibility prior to enrollment.

B. Oder of Priority: Households will be selected based on the following criteria after meeting program eligibility.

Within the score range for each intervention type, selection will first follow the Order of Selection/Prioritization, prioritizing the highest VI-SPDAT score in each selection category.		
TYPE	SCORE RANGE	ORDER OF SELECTION/ PRIORITIZATION
Transitional	Singles and Youth 4-7/Families 4-8	1. Category 1: Unsheltered 2. Category 1: Other 3. Category 4 4. Category 3: Youth programs ONLY 5. Category 2 6. Unsafely or unstably doubled up (MN OEO only)
Bridges	Singles and Youth 4-7/Families 4-8	1. Category 1: Exiting an institution 2. Category 1: Other 3. Category 2
Rapid Re-Housing	Singles and Youth 4-7/Families 4-8	1. Category 1: Unsheltered 2. Category 1: other 3. Category 4 4. Category 2 5. Unsafely or unstably doubled up (MN OEO only)
Note: For the following, the first order of prioritization must be chronic homeless. Within the score range for each intervention type, selection will first follow the Order of Selection/Prioritization, prioritizing the highest VI-SPDAT score in each selection category.		
High Priority homeless (formerly long-term homeless) <u>without supports</u>	Singles/Youth 8-12 Families 9-14	1. Category 1: Unsheltered 2. Category 1: other 3. Category 4 4. Category 2 5. Category 3 6. Unsafely or unstably doubled up

Housing Supports: LTH	Singles/Youth Families 4+	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Category 1: Unsheltered 2. Category 1: other 3. Category 1: Exiting an institution 4. Category 2: Exiting an institution 5. Category 4 6. Category 2 7. Category 3 8. Unsafely or unstably doubled up
Permanent Supportive Housing & High Priority Homeless (formerly Long-term Homeless)-with supports NOTE: PSH must have disability	Singles/Youth 8+ Families 9+	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Category 1: Unsheltered & Disabled 2. Category 1: Emergency Shelter & Disabled 3. Exiting TH: entered as homeless with a Disability 4. Highest priority homeless

C. Tie Breakers: If all else is equal the following prioritization criteria will be used:

1. Longest period of time homeless
2. Veterans
3. Tri-morbid
4. Age: Persons under age 24 or over age 50 years
5. Length of time on the list

D. Special Cases:

1. Households who have enrolled in a program through CARE but require a more intensive housing intervention may be immediately prioritized for the next opening to prevent re-entering homelessness.
2. Households who have been enrolled through CARES or through CES in another MN CoC but are required to move due to extenuating circumstances (employment, health, violence, treatment or education), will be prioritized for the next available opening.

E. Programs Needing to follow CARES policy

TYPE	NORTH DAKOTA PROGRAMS
Prevention	Presentation Partners in Housing Salvation Army of Cass-Clay Southeastern ND Community Action Agency Abused Adult Resource Center Aid Inc.

	<p>Community Violence Intervention Center Dakota Prairie Community Action Agency Northlands Rescue Mission St. Joseph's Social Care Salvation Army-Bismarck Salvation Army-Jamestown YWCA Cass Clay Community Action Program Region VII Native American Development Center Presentation Partners in Housing Red River Valley Community Action St. Joseph's Social Care</p>
Emergency Shelter	<p>Gladys Ray Shelter Fraser, Ltd. - Seasonal Shelter New Life Center Youthworks YWCA Cass Clay Abused Adult Resource Center Community Violence Intervention Center Domestic Violence & Abuse Center (Grafton) Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Center, Inc. Women's Alliance Domestic Violence Crisis Center (Minot) Family Crisis Shelter Inc. Fraser, LTD. Mercer County- Women's Action and Resource Center Minot Area Men's Winter Refuge Missouri Slope Areawide United Way Northland Rescue Mission Red River Valley Community Action Safe Alternatives for Abused Families St. Joseph's Social Care Welcome House, Inc. YWCA of Minot</p>
Transitional	<p>Centre, Inc. - Project HART Youthworks Centre, Inc. YWCA Cass Clay Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Center, Inc. Women's Alliance Abused Adult Resource Center</p>

Rapid Re-Housing	Southeast North Dakota Community Action Agency Gladys Ray Shelter Presentation Partners - Housing Navigation YWCA Cass Clay Abused Adult Resource Center Community Violence Intervention Center Missouri Slope Area Wide United Way Northlands Rescue Mission Safe Alternatives for Abused Families St. Joseph's Social Care Salvation Army-Bismarck Salvation Army-Jamestown YWCA of Minot YWCA Cass Clay Youthworks Native American Development Center Presentation Partners in Housing Red River Valley Community Action Safe Alternatives for Abused Families Community Violence Intervention Center
Permanent Supportive Housing	Fargo Housing & Redevelopment Authority Fargo Housing & Redevelopment Authority - Cooper House Fraser, Ltd. YWCA Cass Clay Red River Valley Community Action ND Dept of Commerce- SPC
TYPE	WEST CENTRAL MN PROGRAMS
Prevention	CAP LP Mahube-Otwa Community Action Presentation Partners in Housing Salvation Army of Cass-Clay West Central MN Communities Action (WCMCA)
Emergency Shelter	Churches United for the Homeless (CUFH) Dorothy Day Mahube-Otwa Motel Vouchers WCMCA Action Motel Vouchers
Transitional	CUFH Housing Supports CAP LP HYA Homework Starts with Home Mahube-Otwa HYA Mahube-Otwa THP WCMCA THP

	White Earth THP
Bridges	BCOW Bridges
Rapid Re-Housing	CAP LP RRH Mahube-Otwa RRH SSVF WCMCA RRH
Housing Supports-scattered site	Clay County HRA Bright Sky West Central Communities Action
Permanent Supportive Housing & Long-term Homeless with Supports	Bright Sky Apartments Gateway Gardens Homeless To Housed HRA CARES Lakes & Prairies PSH Mahube-Otwa ELHF Dream Catcher Homes West River Townhomes White Earth Homes




Homeless Definition

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HOMELESS	Category 1	Literally Homeless	(1) Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; (ii) 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); <u>or</u> (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	(2) Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; <u>and</u> (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	(4) Any individual or family who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence; (ii) Has no other residence; <u>and</u> (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing



Homeless Definition

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS 	Category 1	Literally Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written observation by the outreach worker; <u>or</u> • Written referral by another housing or service provider; <u>or</u> • Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter; • For individuals exiting an institution—one of the forms of evidence above <u>and</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discharge paperwork <u>or</u> written/oral referral, <u>or</u> ○ written record of intake worker’s due diligence to obtain above evidence <u>and</u> certification by individual that they exited institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave; <u>or</u> • For individual and families leaving a hotel or motel—evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; <u>or</u> • A documented and verified oral statement; <u>and</u> • Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> • Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lack the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification by the nonprofit or state or local government that the individual or head of household seeking assistance met the criteria of homelessness under another federal statute; <u>and</u> • Certification of no PH in last 60 days; <u>and</u> • Certification by the individual or head of household, and any available supporting documentation, that (s)he has moved two or more times in the past 60 days; <u>and</u> • Documentation of special needs <u>or</u> 2 or more barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. Statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker. • <i>For non-victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by a self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the individual or family is not jeopardized, the oral statement must be verified; <u>and</u> ○ Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> ○ Self-certification, or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.