

Housing Navigator – Core Tasks Checklist

Outreach and Engagement

- Provide primarily outreach-based rather than office-based work for clients that may move among various programs and locations.
- Respond to client's priority felt needs or emergency situations – food, health, income, transportation, etc.
- Link clients with interim or bridge housing resources as desired and available.

Partnership Development

- Develop rapport and build an ongoing relationship with clients via regular and consistent contact.
- Establish communication links with and for clients – phone/cell phone, mailing address, e-mail, meeting locations, social support contacts.
- Help clients link with *clinical care management* and other service resources as needed and desired.
- Provide psychological/emotional preparation and support for clients around obtaining housing - realistic expectations of wait times, realistic expectations of housing options within budget, benefits and challenges of living with others, remaining hopeful, addressing fears/ambivalence of being housed, addressing unhealthy coping skills/street behavior that could disrupt housing, tenant obligations, conflict resolution preparation.

Core Housing Preparation Work

- Assess and begin to address client housing histories and barriers – positive references, credit history, rental history and prior evictions, criminal history, registered sex offender status, outstanding debts, outstanding warrants. Use housing history to inform preparation work, complete early to avoid surprises.
- Get to know members or potential members of the client's household including pets and companion animals.
- Assess for potential to reconnect with family/friends for housing.
- Assess eligibility for permanent housing resources – deposit/move-in financial assistance, rapid re-housing, affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing.
- Assess the client's financial and resource situation and potential budget for housing – help with income and benefits acquisition, develop plan to help fund move-in costs.
- Help clients create tenant resumes – key information to use on housing applications.

Getting Housing

- Help clients identify and pursue other potential housing opportunities besides permanent supportive and affordable housing.
- Help clients tour neighborhoods and properties – address rejections as part of reality testing – “at least look at the place, you don't have to take it”; provide options and discuss trade-offs.
- Help clients complete and submit required housing applications and other materials, including housing navigator and/or other support person(s) on applications as a contact. Include release of information. Include advocacy/support letters with initial application.
- Help clients complete housing program or site specific paperwork to obtain particular units or subsidies.
- Assist clients with obtaining the resources necessary to apply for and move-in to housing (application fees, security deposits, first month rent, moving service, furnishings, bedding, etc.).

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- Support clients in preparing for housing interviews or other meetings that impact their ability to obtain permanent housing.
- Assist clients in responding to rejections; help request reasonable accommodations or appeals when appropriate.
- Utilize information and housing specialist(s) to find landlords that will accept housing subsidies for clients approved for voucher or tenant-based housing subsidy programs.
- Assist clients with move-in to new unit and with transitioning support to permanent supportive housing service provider(s) and/or other resources.

Moving-In and Transitioning (average of 6 months of support)

- Complete unit inspection and document any damage or issues prior to move-in.
- Review key elements of rental agreement and expectations to ensure understanding. Review any subsidy agreement as well, if needed.
- Establish utilities for the housing unit. Apply for low-income assistance utility programs. (*See Resource Guide*)
- Assist with obtaining furniture, fixtures, and other move-in needs (*See First Apartment Checklist*).
- Update address with key agencies and contacts including the post office, health insurance, public benefits, and service providers.
- Establish method for ensuring rent payments made on time.
- Develop a housing crisis response plan outlining plans if challenges arise that may jeopardize housing stability including key emergency contacts for service and housing-related issues (*Examples – WRAP plan or Housing Advance Directive*). Possible housing challenges include – mental health/substance use relapse, health and cognitive issues impacting Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), non-payment of rent, conflicts with neighbors or landlord, unauthorized guests, hoarding/cluttering, smoking and fire hazards, plumbing/flooding issues.
- Transition ongoing supports to appropriate service providers and natural community supports.
- Review ability of clients to manage Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) *See ADLs checklist*.
- Help address any challenges with independent living. Consider need for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Support IHSS application and worker selection process if needed.
- Help develop skills relevant to living with others in residential community – conflict resolution, communication skills, raising concerns with neighbors and landlords, etc.
- Assist with helping individuals create a sense of home – personalization, inviting guests, art work, etc.

Consider – 15-25 active clients for each 1.0 FTE housing navigator