

# Task Force to End Chronic Homelessness



Oct. 2010

## Wichita - Sedgwick County Housing First Program

### What is Housing First?

Housing First simply means putting people without homes into housing, first. It is an alternative to the traditional approach of emergency shelter/transitional housing, which tends to prolong the length of time that persons remain homeless. It is premised on the belief that vulnerable and at-risk homeless people are more responsive to interventions and social services support after they are in their own housing, rather than while living in temporary/transitional facilities, or on the streets.

### Who is eligible for services?

The Housing First program is designed to serve chronically homeless single adults; that is, single people over the age of 18 who have experienced either long-term or repeated episodes of homelessness. During such repeated or long periods of homelessness, one may experience a disabling condition, which may limit their ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living. Examples include: mental illness, developmental disability, chronic physical illness or diagnosable substance use disorder.

### What services are available?

- Rental assistance with a sliding scale for client participation. The scale would start at \$0.00 and continue upward until the participant is able to pay the full amount.
- Funds to pay landlords for tenant damages.
- Case management and/or counseling services to address addictions, mental health, chronic physical conditions, developmental disabilities, and other needs that may emerge.

### What are the goals of the program?

- To place chronically homeless persons into permanent housing and to provide the appropriate support needed to help them achieve their maximum potential.
- To save community resources. Since the Wichita-Sedgwick County Housing First program began housing individuals, we have seen:
  - An 84 percent reduction in individuals getting arrested
  - An 83 percent reduction in individuals going to jail
  - A 52 percent reduction in individuals visiting the ER
  - A 13 percent increase in participants seeking treatment



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## Housing First Program Requirements

**An applicant must meet the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of chronically homeless.**

“The term chronically homeless as defined by HUD describes an unaccompanied person with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for at least one year OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”

- A person who is “doubling up” is not considered homeless.
- A person who is staying with family and friends is not considered homeless.
- A person who is staying in hotels and motels is not considered homeless.
- Our current focus is on single adults only. We hope to accommodate families and/or couples in the future.

**An applicant must have a case manager.**

The referring agency is expected to conduct weekly in-home visits once the client moves into an apartment. The case manager also is responsible to help their client find an apartment with assistance from the city of Wichita Housing Office Housing First Specialist Shelly Haupt. Shelly has information for landlords who are interested and willing to work with the county/city for Housing First.

**An applicant must have a disabling condition.**

This must be a diagnosable mental illness, physical illness, substance abuse diagnosis, chronic physical illness, or developmental disability.

**An applicant will be required to pay up to 30 percent of their income toward rent and/or utilities when approved for Housing First.**

It is not mandatory to have an income to apply. Our hope is that clients will at some point begin to work or receive Social Security benefits and be able to pay a portion for rent and utilities until they are able to pay these independently. This will allow money to be used for other homeless individuals to be housed, as well as help housed individuals achieve financial responsibility and independent living.

**Questions?**

Contact Maggie Flanders at 660-7615 or [mflander@sedgwick.gov](mailto:mflander@sedgwick.gov).



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## Steps to Apply for Housing First

1. Send completed application to Maggie Flanders via fax at 660-7510, e-mail her at [mflander@sedgwick.gov](mailto:mflander@sedgwick.gov) or send the application through interoffice mail to Human Services administration.
2. Maggie will review the application and determine eligibility.
3. Maggie will inform Shelly Haupt and the case manager of approved application(s).
4. Shelly will contact the case manager with potential apartment/landlord contact information.
5. The case manager searches for an apartment with the client.
6. Once an apartment is found, the case manager will inform Shelly of apartment information (name of apartment, address, and phone # if different than leads that were provided).
7. If an application fee is needed, contact Maggie and/or Shelly to pay. Maggie will pay application fee to apartment complex. She will need:
  - The address of the landlord or apartment manager
  - The application fee amount
  - The apartment/landlord phone number
  - Payment method accepted: money order, check, cash or credit card
  - Name of the client
8. Shelly will contact apartment/landlord to obtain rental specifics (deposit, rent or partial rent payment)
9. Once the application from apartment/landlord has been approved, Shelly will begin check request process and schedule a move-in date.
10. Shelly will inform all parties of the move-in date, time and location
11. On the scheduled move-in date the case manager, client, Shelly and Maggie (when available) will attend the lease signing at the leasing office.



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