



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Administrative Directive Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	20-ADM-10
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Housing, Refugee Services and Disability Determinations
Date:	August 14, 2020
Subject:	Homeless Services Plan and Outcome Reporting
Suggested Distribution:	Temporary Assistance Directors Housing Staff Staff Development Coordinator Director of Services
Contact Person(s):	Linda Camoin; (518) 473-6661; linda.camoin@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	Attachment 1 - Homeless Services Plan Template Attachment 2 - Homeless Services Plan Outcome Report Template Attachment 3 - List of HUD-Funded Continuum of Care Contacts

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
	19-ADM-03	18NYCRR §304.2			

Section 2

I. Summary

This Administrative Directive (ADM) informs social services districts (districts) of the requirement that they submit comprehensive homeless services plans and report on outcomes achieved as result of these plans.

II. Purpose

This ADM informs districts of the regulation promulgated at 18 NYCRR §304.2. The regulation requires districts to develop and submit to OTDA for approval a comprehensive homeless services plan at least every two years. The homeless services plans are intended to help reduce homelessness through improved coordination of homeless services and to provide more comprehensive program outcome data.

The comprehensive homeless services plan must be submitted by September 15, 2020 for the period of October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2022. The homeless services plan must address specified program components and delineate strategies for reducing homelessness, including strategies related to veterans experiencing homelessness. The regulation further requires each district to periodically report outcomes achieved to OTDA which is required on a semi-annual basis.

III. Background

18 NYCRR §304.2 was adopted to ensure that each district has a comprehensive plan for addressing homelessness, including homelessness among veterans, that reflects coordination of locally available services. The plan must document the availability of homeless prevention services, as well as a continuum of housing and services for individuals and families, including veterans and their families, who become homeless. The plan should include the following components: homelessness prevention services, outreach, emergency shelter, housing assessment and coordinated entry process, transitional housing, and permanent housing. Permanent supportive housing should be sought for homeless persons who are unable to achieve housing stability without receiving ongoing supports. Proposed revisions to an approved homeless services plan must be submitted to OTDA for approval.

The goal of having a homeless services plan is to reduce homelessness, both by preventing it in the first place, and by moving those who do become homeless into permanent housing as quickly as possible, while providing the supports necessary to maintain housing stability. This goal includes ending veterans' homelessness by linking veterans to permanent housing within 90 days of presenting as homeless. The range of services available to veterans and experiences to date provide confidence this goal can be achieved by every district. The plans are intended to improve local coordination of homeless services and provide more comprehensive program outcome data. Outcomes for each component of the plan must be identified and tracked with an overall goal of homelessness reduction. Districts are required to report every six months on the outcomes achieved.

IV. Program Implications

The reduction of homelessness requires a concerted and coordinated effort among federal, state, and local governments, as well with not-for-profit and/or faith-based agencies. The purpose of the district homeless services plan is to identify all the resources within the district available to address homelessness, including homelessness among veterans, and facilitate local coordination of strategies targeted to homelessness reduction. In order to accomplish this coordination, districts are strongly encouraged to work closely with Continuum of Care homeless services coordinating bodies required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as county offices of veterans' services and, where appropriate, the federal Veterans Administration (VA).

Coordination with the local HUD-funded Continuum of Care homeless services coordinating body will support each district's ability to establish a homeless services plan and to track services and outcomes. Data regarding program-specific and district-wide outcomes can be tracked by making use of existing data collection methods such as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Partnerships with local Continuum of Care homeless services coordinating bodies and veterans' services agencies will allow districts to integrate local and state resources for addressing homelessness with those provided by the federal government. Since local HUD-funded Continuum of Care coordinating bodies can serve homeless persons regardless of their eligibility for temporary housing assistance (THA), HUD-funded Continuum of Care resources may be helpful in addressing the needs of those who are not eligible for THA. Conversely, state and local resources can be used to serve homeless persons who are not eligible for HUD-funded homeless assistance, such as when necessary for those who are re-entering the community from incarceration or other institutional settings.

V. Required Action

A. DEFINITIONS

- “Assessment” is the evaluation of the individual’s or family’s housing and housing-related needs.
- “Coordinated entry” refers to a process by which communities prioritize assistance to homeless individuals and families based on an assessment of their vulnerability and severity of their needs.
- “Emergency shelter” means short-term housing accompanied by support services in which the individual/family being housed does not have a lease. This includes short-term housing provided in a shelter built specifically for this purpose, or in other short-term housing such as that provided by a hotel or motel paid for by the social services district or not-for-profit agency.
- “Homeless” means undomiciled and unable to secure or maintain permanent stable housing without assistance. This definition excludes persons who are living “doubled up” with friends or with family.
- “Homelessness prevention” means services and assistance aimed at retention of existing housing or providing alternatives to emergency shelter; including but not limited to eviction prevention, case management, and “shelter diversion” programs.
- “Housing retention services” are the supports necessary for formerly homeless persons to remain stably housed. These include income supports, such as employment, job training, and disability benefits and other assistance; substance use and mental health treatment; medical care; legal assistance; life skills including budgeting; child care; parenting skills; conflict negotiation; and other services as needed.
- “Outreach” refers to the engagement of persons experiencing homelessness in order to link them to services, assistance, and housing. It can include direct outreach to undomiciled persons through outreach workers or law enforcement officers as well as community-based outreach provided through agencies that serve persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, such as, but not limited to food pantries, soup kitchens, drop-in centers.
- “Permanent housing” means community-based housing without a designated length of stay and includes both permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing. To be permanent housing, the program participant must be the tenant on a lease, or be party to an occupancy agreement, for a term of at least one year, which is renewable for terms that are a minimum of one month long and is terminable only for cause.
- “Permanent supportive housing” means permanent housing in which supportive services are provided to assist homeless persons in remaining stably housed.
- “Point-in-time count” means a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons carried out on one night in the last 10 calendar days of January or at such other time as required by either HUD or OTDA.
- “Rapid rehousing” is a form of permanent housing accompanied by case management for which rental subsidies can be provided for up to 24 months with the goal of helping the household attain self-sufficiency after the rent subsidies end.
- “Temporary housing assistance” (THA) is a temporary assistance benefit provided for an eligible homeless individual or family to meet an immediate need for shelter.

- “Transitional housing” refers to housing where all program participants have a signed lease or occupancy agreement, the purpose of which is to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families into permanent housing.
- “Veteran” refers to an adult who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, including persons who served on active duty from the military reserves or the National Guard, regardless of discharge status. Documentation of veteran status is not required.

B. HOMELESS SERVICES PLAN

OTDA regulations require that the comprehensive homeless services plan be submitted at least every two years. Districts must submit the plan no later than September 15, 2020 and cover the period from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022. The plan must be submitted to OTDA using the template provided in Attachment 1. While much of the plan may be the same as what was provided for the period covering October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2020, there are new required elements of the plan detailing housing and services provided to veterans.

Please note that services provided under “Code Blue” conditions should be incorporated into the homeless services plan but a separate “Code Blue” funding request, if applicable, must be submitted in response to a call for Code Blue budgets. As a reminder, OTDA will consider provision of funding under Code Blue only in situations where the locality was not already paying for Code Blue-related expenses when the original Executive Order 151, which created the statewide Code Blue program, went into effect.

The comprehensive homeless services plan should describe the proposed strategies for addressing the required components listed below.

Identification of the Number of Homeless Persons

- Provide the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless households and individuals the district identified in the most recently conducted point-in-time count (even if not yet published by HUD, these numbers are available from the local Continuum of Care coordinating body). Of these households and individuals, please also specify which of these are homeless veterans and families of veterans.
- Provide an unduplicated count of single individuals (including two adults living together without children) and families with children for whom the district provided temporary housing assistance in the last Federal fiscal year (Oct-Sept).
- What primary factors are likely to impact homelessness in your district during the two-year period from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022. Summarize the major steps that the district, in conjunction with its other partners, will take to reduce the numbers of homeless persons in the district.
- What primary factors are likely to impact veterans experiencing homelessness in your district during the two-year period from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022. Summarize the major steps that the district, in conjunction with its veteran partners, will take to reduce the numbers of homeless persons in the district.

Outreach Services

- List all the strategies that will be used to conduct outreach year-round to homeless individuals and families. Include both street outreach activities and outreach to not-for-profits and faith-based agencies that serve homeless persons.
- List all the strategies that will be used to conduct outreach year-round to all veterans experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered. Include all data sources, and other methods, that will be used to identify, enumerate, and engage unsheltered veterans.
- List the additional outreach strategies that will be used during “Code Blue” periods (when the temperature is at or below 32 degrees with wind chill) to move homeless persons out of the cold to safety. Provide specific information about where homeless persons will be referred and how they will be transported to these locations.
- For each outreach strategy, both year-round and during Code Blue periods, list the entity providing the outreach, the type of outreach to be provided, the population to be served, and the number that are projected to be served annually.
- For each outreach strategy, provide percentages of those served that are anticipated to be moved into the following: permanent housing; temporary housing (including transitional and emergency housing); and institutions (including hospitals, mental health treatment facilities, residential substance use treatment, etc.).
- For each outreach strategy, provide percentages of veterans served that are anticipated to be moved into the following: permanent housing; temporary housing (including transitional and emergency housing); and institutions (including hospitals, mental health treatment facilities, residential substance use treatment, etc.).
- Describe the roles played by law enforcement and local mental health and substance use treatment providers in implementing the local Code Blue outreach strategy.
- Indicate which city, town or village is used to call Code Blue alerts.
- Project how many nights during the period October 1 – September 30 that temperature, taking in to account wind chill, are expected to go below 32F.

Homelessness Prevention Services

- Describe all the strategies that will be used to prevent households from becoming homeless, including services that are targeted specifically to veterans.
- Provide a list of all programs that provide homelessness prevention services and the projected number of households that will be served by each on an annual basis.
- Provide a projection of the percentage of the households receiving these services for whom homelessness will be successfully prevented.

Emergency Shelter

- Describe the district's year-round emergency shelter strategy, both for persons who are eligible for THA, and those who are not, including the following:
 - Referral, intake and shelter placement process, including after-hours placement;
 - Listing of all emergency shelters for single individuals, including short-term crisis management placements (crisis beds and stability beds), and emergency shelters for families and the capacities of each, noting any specific target populations served if applicable.
- Describe the district's strategy to immediately offer some form of shelter to any veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it.
- Provide a list of all emergency shelters for single individuals and families including their respective capacities and target populations served (if applicable).
- Provide a projection of the average length of stay in emergency shelters as well as an average length of stay for hotel/motel stays for single individuals and families. Within those categories, please specify the average length of stay for single veterans and veterans and their families.
- Provide a narrative description of what steps the district will undertake to reduce the average length of emergency housing stays, where needed, during the plan period.
- Describe what steps the district will undertake to ensure each veteran and their family can achieve permanent housing within 90 days.
- Describe how often local district staff, or the district's contractor, meet with families who are experiencing homelessness to review Independent Living Plan goals and steps necessary to meet those goals, including efforts to look for permanent housing. Include in the description the district supports provided and client expectations.
- Describe how often local district staff, or the district's contractor, meet with single individuals who are experiencing homelessness to review Independent Living Plan goals and steps necessary to meet those goals, including efforts to look for permanent housing. Include in the description the district supports provided and client expectations.
- Provide a projection of the percentages of single individuals and families, who during the plan period will be moved from shelter into each of the following: transitional housing, permanent housing including rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.
- Of those single individuals and families, also provide a projection of the percentages of single veterans and veterans and their families, who during the plan period will be moved from shelter into each of the following: transitional housing, permanent housing including rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.
- Describe the district's Code Blue shelter strategy, detailing the availability of shelter resources in addition to those used for year-round shelter, including their target populations, capacities, and projected average number of persons expected to be placed in shelter on Code Blue nights.

Transitional Housing

- Describe the transitional housing resources available to homeless persons in the district:
 - List all transitional housing for single individuals and families and the capacities of each, noting any specific target populations served if applicable. Only those programs that are specifically targeted to homeless individuals and families need to be included. For example, a transitional housing program for persons with mental illness that does not exclusively target homeless persons with mental illness need not be listed.
- Explain the circumstances under which placement in transitional housing would be considered instead of direct placement into permanent housing.

Assessment and Coordinated Entry

- Describe the district's process for assessing the needs of homeless persons for transitional housing and for permanent housing (including rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing). Specify who is responsible for these assessments and how they will be conducted.
- Describe the district's role in the HUD-mandated coordinated entry process for housing placement. Please attach a copy of the assessment tool and scoring instrument. Describe the role played by the district in working with the local Continuum of Care coordinating body to ensure that those who are the most vulnerable and have the greatest needs are appropriately housed.
- Identify the person or entity that manages a "by-name" list of veterans experiencing homelessness. Include how often the list is updated and how veterans are prioritized for housing placement.

Permanent Housing

- Describe the linkages that the district has with permanent housing providers that provide housing that is affordable to extremely low-income persons (those with incomes of less than 30% of the area median income.) This may include rapid rehousing programs, local housing authorities, not-for-profits, and private landlords. Describe the process by which homeless persons will be referred to this housing. Include information about any rent supplements or subsidies such as Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) and how homeless persons will be assisted in accessing these resources.
- Describe how permanent housing for all veterans experiencing homelessness has been identified. Describe how the district is able to assist veterans move into permanent housing quickly.
- Identify all rapid rehousing programs located in the district and how many households such programs are expected to provide rental subsidies to in each year of the plan.

Permanent Supportive Housing

- Provide a listing of all permanent supportive housing resources for homeless persons in the district, along with their respective target populations and capacities.
- Describe the district's role in facilitating the movement of eligible persons from shelter into this housing. Include how the district will facilitate movement of veterans from shelter to permanent supportive housing (if needed) within 90 days of shelter entry and without barriers to entry using housing first principles and practices.

Housing Retention Supports

Please describe the supports available within the district to assist homeless persons in retaining housing stability. These include, but are not limited to, medical care, including linkages with Health Homes and Health and Recovery Programs (HARP); substance use and mental health treatment; veterans services; employment services; fiscal management and budgeting skills; child care; parenting classes; legal services; and conflict negotiation skills. Describe the process by which formerly homeless persons will be linked to these resources and how program effectiveness will be measured.

C. HOMELESS SERVICES OUTCOMES REPORT

It is the responsibility of the district to track compliance with its comprehensive homeless services plan and to regularly submit homeless services outcome reports using the attached template (see Attachment 2) regarding the numbers of singles and families, including single veterans and veteran families served, in each plan component and the outcomes achieved by the community as a whole. Reports will be due semi-annually, 45 days following the end of each six-month period covered by the comprehensive homeless services plan, on or about May 15 and November 15.

Tracking of plan outcomes can be accomplished by the local district through entry of data for each person served into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Local Continuum of Care coordinating bodies already make use of the HMIS to track program outcomes and this data can be easily aggregated. Many districts are already participating in the local HMIS; those that are not will need to work with the local Continuum of Care to determine how they can be included. Contact information for each Continuum of Care coordinated body can be found in Attachment 3. OTDA staff are available to facilitate the coordination of district activities with those of Continuum of Care coordinating entities.

VI. Systems Implications

Data will need to be tracked through a Homeless Management Information System or other electronic system that conforms to HMIS data standards promulgated by HUD.

VII. Additional Information (Optional)

The comprehensive homeless services plan must be submitted to Linda Camoin by September 15, 2020 and cover the period from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2022. Questions may be directed to Linda Camoin at linda.camoin@otda.ny.gov or by telephone at (518) 473-6661.

VIII. Effective Date

Immediately.

Issued By:

Name: Linda Glassman

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Housing, Refugee Services, and Disability Determinations (HRDD)