**Housing Problem-Solving Community Initiative**

Sacramento Steps Forward and the Continuum of Care are developing a community-wide effort to integrate housing problem-solving (HPS) into the homeless response system. Our goal is to help leverage current resources and reduce new entries into homelessness, while reducing overall length of time homeless for households across the continuum with upstream approaches.

**What is housing problem-solving?**

Trained staff problem-solve with households to understand their strengths and existing support networks. The goal is to explore safe housing options, even if temporary, and to connect the household to community supports and services, including mediation and conflict resolution with family, friends, and/or landlords, connections to mainstream resources, housing location assistance, housing stabilization planning, family reunification, and, in limited cases, financial assistance when needed. See Homelessness Response System flowchart below to see how it fits into the overall system.

**When can financial assistance be offered?**

A housing problem solving conversation should always be attempted as the very first step. If after other options have been explored, the housing crisis has not been resolved, and the financial assistance would support a housing resolution, including:

* + - * Permanent housing on their own
			* Viable, safe permanent housing with family and/or friends
			* Viable, safe housing with family and/or friends, with a plan for permanency
			* Remaining stably housed after being at-risk of homelessness

**What can the financial assistance be used for?**

Rental assistance, security deposit, housing application fees, rental arrears, eviction avoidance, moving costs, etc. (Please see full list in Training Manual). $5,000 maximum request limit.

**Who is eligible for housing problem-solving?**

Households at risk of homelessness (within 21 days), fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence sexual assault tor human trafficking, and households experiencing literal homelessness that have not identified a safe housing option for tonight.

**How can my agency get involved?**

Here are 2 ways your agency can get involved and what to consider when deciding:

1. Act as a housing problem-solving access point:
	1. Provide housing problem-solving supports to at-risk or homeless households seeking services, including problem-solving conversations, resource connections, and/or one-time financial assistance when needed
	2. Submit required documentation for financial assistance requests
	3. Enter data into HMIS, including a program enrollment, HPS service, assessments, financial assistance requests and exit data. Note: Victim service providers would be entering data for clients anonymously.
	4. Receive referrals from 2-1-1 (optional)

Ideal if your agency:

* Regularly explores housing solutions and conducts assessments or referrals to resources, inputs data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), wants to expand its ability to connect clients to resources and shelter through 211
* Willingness to receive housing problem-solving training (2-day in-person training)
* Willing to enter an MOU with SSF
* Ability to utilize housing problem-solving funds to provide limited financial assistance for households (i.e. security deposit, first-month’s rent, etc.)
* Utilizes trauma-informed practices to reduce and prevent further trauma
* Is committed to furthering racial equity by ensuring access for underserved populations, including Blacks, Indigenous and People of Color
1. Host a housing problem-solving specialist (or CAN team member) at your site regularly, or at specific dates/events
	1. HPS Specialist performs all the functions of a problem-solving access point (see above), but would be hosted at your site or events

 Ideal if your agency:

* Wants to begin exploring housing solutions with clients, but does not regularly conduct assessments, refer to resources, or enter data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
* Lacks staff capacity to act as a problem-solving access point but serves the homeless population in underserved areas
* Utilizes trauma-informed practices to reduce and prevent further trauma
* Is committed to furthering racial equity by ensuring access for underserved populations, including Blacks, Indigenous and People of Color

**Interested in Becoming an HPS Access Point?**

Contact SSF at psaps@sacstepsforward.org to get started!