

Housing Assistance Screening Tool (HAST) *SINGLES and FAMILIES* Companion Guide

The Housing Assistance Screening Tool (HAST) version 1.3, effective 1/01/2020, replaces HAST version 1.2 and the former Welcome Screen tool used for both families and single adults. **Shelter providers should screen ALL new shelter residents (families or single adults) as soon as possible, but no later than 5 business days after shelter admission**, using the standardized Housing Assistance Screening Tool and referral process for rapid re-housing (RRH).

Why are we doing the HAST?

The Housing Assistance Screening Tool is used to identify the client's prior homeless assistance history (if previously homeless), as well as their characteristics, housing-related barriers and re-housing needs in order to connect them to best available re-housing assistance for which they are eligible. The tool helps staff identify next step housing assistance, including:

- 1) Veterans who should be connected to Veterans coordinated entry and re-housing assistance resources.
- 2) Individuals and families who are already receiving rapid re-housing assistance and who should be re-connected to the RRH provider.
- 3) Individuals and families who have been previously identified for permanent supportive housing through USHS and who should be re-connected with the provider assisting them with USHS.
- 4) Key household characteristics and re-housing barriers to determine if the individual or family has significant re-housing needs and is a potential priority for rapid re-housing assistance. Upon submitting a completed HAST form, families and individualizes are further screened, scored and prioritized for RRH assistance. Clients who have the highest score, starting with certain target populations, are then offered RRH when a program slot becomes available.
- 5) Individuals and families who are not selected for or otherwise already receiving RRH should be assisted by shelter staff with their Individualized Housing Stabilization Plan (IHSP) and housing search/placement.

This process allows our system to maximize limited re-housing assistance and ensure all available housing resources for persons experiencing homeless are flexibly and immediately offered to the individuals who need them most acutely in that moment.

Why are we asking these questions?

Factors that cause an individual or family to become or remain homeless are varied and range from structural issues, such as lack of affordable housing and racism, to specific individual vulnerabilities (e.g., severe and persistent disabling condition(s)) and housing barriers (e.g., criminal record, prior evictions, or having little to no income). These screening tools are intended to be brief and least-invasive, so the factors in this tool do not account for all the possible factors associated with continued homelessness, but rather factors that most directly affect an individual or family's ability secure housing with or without assistance. These items were narrowed down by representatives from every point in our system to best meet the needs of our community.

These next sections are intended to be a quick-reference, companion document for the HAST. It is not meant to supplant training on how to use this tool.

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Part 1: CLIENT INFORMATION SECTION

Pre-Screening in CSP for the following:

<p>Veteran: If the person is a veteran, STOP and contact the <i>Responsible Provider</i> listed in CSP. If no Responsible Provider is listed, contact Veteran Coordinated Entry Specialist, John Roszkowski at John.Roszkowski@va.gov or 614-439-8971 To find Veteran Status in CSP, go to <i>Client Profile</i>, and the field under <i>client record</i> is “U.S. Military Veteran”</p>
<p>RRH: Persons <i>currently enrolled with a RRH provider</i> do not need to complete the interview section (Part 2), instead please have them contact their RRH provider (also called “Direct Housing”) at this time to alert them of a return to shelter, and schedule a meeting with the person as soon as possible. To find the RRH/Direct Housing Case Manager info in CSP, go to the <i>Case Managers</i> tab, and check for the most recent Direct Housing record.</p> <p>For those persons who were enrolled with a RRH provider in last 12 months, please complete the remainder of the HAST (as applicable). Those who have been linked and served by a RRH provider within the last 12 months are <i>not</i> automatically deemed ineligible for RRH services, but may need to appeal to receive RRH assistance following the formal appeals process.</p>
<p>USHS: For single adults, immediately contact the YMCA RRH case manager/director assigned to your shelter. For families, immediately contact the provider assisting the family with their USHS application. To find the invitation in USHS in CSP go to the <i>Client Profile</i> tab, scroll all the way down to the <i>Client Notes</i> section, scroll through the records through to the most recent 6 months. For client’s in this pool you will see “Invited to submit SSNA” in the <i>Notes Preview</i> section.</p>
<p>Street Outreach: For persons already engaged with street outreach, please contact street outreach, preferably with the client, to alert them that their client has entered shelter. Complete HAST as usual. To find this information in CSP, go to the <i>Entry/Exit</i> tab and search through records. Outreach clients will have a record with Program type “MCOT Outreach” and no <i>Exit Date</i>, meaning they are still open. PROGRAM CONTACT: Thomas Adams, Outreach Program Coordinator, Maryhaven Engagement Center email: tadams@maryhaven.com or phone 614-449-1530 x213</p>
<p>Number of minor children in the household: This information can be found on the <i>Household</i> tab in CSP.</p>
<p>Determining the number of Shelter Entries: This information can be found on the <i>Entry/Exit</i> tab in CSP.</p>

Part 2: CLIENT INTERVIEW SECTION

Screening Script: This script is only intended to be a guide. You are always welcome to read this script as it is written, especially if you are new to using this tool, it may help you develop your own way of saying the same *important points* which allows you to better engage and build rapport with the client. If you prefer to use your own words, you must cover these *important points* every time: *why we are asking, who has access to the responses, there are limited resources and the person must continue to work on resolving their housing crisis, and of their right to refuse.*

- **Consent:** The client has the right to refuse. If the person responds “No”, Stop and proceed to **PART 3**. Use all the information available to you in CSP, from observation, and from Part 1: Client Information section to determine Next Step. *Remind client: Shelter residents must continue to actively seek safe, alternative housing to remain eligible for shelter.*
- **“Serious Health Conditions” (i.e., severe and persistent disabling conditions):** This question is by client self-report. Use your judgement, if a client reports health conditions that are not likely to be permanent as the reason for losing a job or housing, this does not meet the criteria of *serious health* condition. Some examples of this may be reports that a broken arm, or a car accident resulting in physical trauma caused missed work and inability to pay rent. While these are common reasons for a loss of housing, they would not be considered

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severe and persistent or a serious health condition. Serious health conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- Diabetes
- COPD/Emphysema
- Tuberculosis
- Cancer
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Hepatitis
- Liver Disease
- Heart Disease
- Physical Disability
- Serious mental health condition
- Drug and/or alcohol use
- HIV+/AIDS
- Developmental Disability

DO NOT write any conditions on the HAST form (HIPPA).

- **Domestic Violence in the previous 6 months:** Please ensure that the client is in a safe and confidential environment. The response should be whatever the client reports and may be violence at the hands of *any* cohabitant including spouse, intimate partner, family member, children. The client does not need to explain further. If the client's response is "Yes", we additionally want to know if this has happened in the last 3 months.
- **Felony History:** Felony charges that may appear on a public record make finding housing more difficult, as most landlords will conduct a background check. Felony convictions also disproportionately impact people of color, and contribute to their over-representation in the homeless population. Combatting disparities in homelessness is key to changing the historical paradigm. Clients may be hesitant to respond to this question and sharing with them that this question is seeking to understand their personal housing barriers, not create additional ones, may be helpful. For households with multiple adults, attempt to capture the felony history of all adults (over 18) in the household that will be on the lease when they become rehoused. This information is critical to avoiding delays in housing matching.
- **Previous Evictions:** Similar to the above question, this is addressing the person's housing barriers. Responses are based upon client self-report. You may have an client that is unsure of whether an eviction is on their record. You can offer to check with the client at: <http://www.fcmcclerk.com/case/search>. All eviction records are coded CVG in the case number. The goal is to capture what a landlord might see on a public record. It is important to capture eviction history of all the adults (over 18) in the household, being careful not to double count a residence (i.e. a couple report that both were evicted from their previous residence together, that would be 1 eviction).
- **Housing Match:** These questions are not scored but will assist our landlord relations in an effort to more quickly match client's with landlords that have immediate openings. It is important to gather as much detailed information as the client can offer at the time of the interview.
- **Employment Questions:** On the HAST for Families, question 11 is meant to help match persons interested in job training to specific RRH programs with a job training component. Because there is no guarantee that there will be openings in these specific programs, it is important to explain that to the client.

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IF PERSON IS 25 OR OLDER OR IF ANYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD IS 25 OR OLDER, STOP – COMPLETE PART 3.

QUESTIONS FOR UNACCOMPANIED OR PARENTING YOUTH AGE 18-24 ONLY

Unaccompanied youth and youth heads of households (HoH) with minor children have some specific factors that both contribute to their risk of continued homelessness and make them more at-risk of serious harm or death while experiencing homelessness. For these reasons, the following questions have been added to this tool.

- **History of Child Protective Services or Juvenile Justice:** This question speaks to a lack of support system, and possibly a history of trauma. Like the question regarding felonies, we see a significant overrepresentation of youth of color in both Child Protective services, sometimes called “foster care” or “FCCS” and Juvenile Justice, also referred to as “Detention” or “Probation” as a minor.
- **Youth who identify as LGBTQIA+:** This acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and Asexual. The + (plus) refers to the fact that some youth may identify as a sexual minority but not a specific “label”. Some youth may have an initial reaction to this question, so it may be important to educate the client on the reason this is asked. This population makes up a large proportion of youth experiencing homelessness. Youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ are more likely to experience victimization, be exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, and resort to crimes of survival.
 - a. It’s a good idea to check in with staff about their level of comfortability in asking this question and the need for additional training. See: <https://learn.truecolorsunited.org/inclusion-toolkit/>
- **Loss of Stable Housing:** Being kicked out of your childhood home for reasons other than you are ready to live on your own can have a catastrophic ripple effect in the life of a young person. These young people often have multiple attempts and setbacks in housing stability as they transition to adulthood with little safety net and support system from their family of origin. Record the total number experienced checked (max. 4) in the space provided.
 - a. Religious or Cultural Beliefs
 - b. Conflict around gender identity or sexual orientation
 - c. Violence in the home
 - d. Unhealthy or Abusive Relationship
- **Risk of Exploitation or Victimization while homeless:** This question is intended to be self-report and is only asking for a response *since becoming homeless*. Some youth may not know what this means. It is okay to give an example of common experiences that a youth may identify. It is important with questions of this nature, that you never label a client’s experience as exploitation or victimization, unless the client has first acknowledged this experience as exploitation or victimization.
- **GED or High School Diploma:** This accounts for the number one risk factor for youth.
- **Interest in Transition-Age Program and Life skills:** This is not a criterion question. It is meant to help match youth interested in youth-specific RRH programs that account for the life skills youth need to live independently. Because there is no guarantee that there will be openings in these specific programs, it is important to explain that to the client.

Part 3: NEXT STEP HOUSING ASSISTANCE

When you have completed the screening with the client, you will then complete this section. This section should be completed on every HAST, regardless of the outcome. The options below will guide you and the client to discuss next steps.

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✓ Client is a Veteran: Veterans have a specific coordinated entry process. If the person is a Veteran you will contact the <i>Responsible Provider</i> listed in CSP. If no Responsible Provider is listed, contact Veteran Coordinated Entry Specialist, John Roszkowski at 614-439-8971
✓ Client currently enrolled with a RRH provider: Persons <i>currently linked with a RRH provider</i> do not need to complete the interview section, instead please have them contact their RRH provider at this time to alert them of a return to shelter, and schedule a meeting with the person as soon as possible.
✓ Client has invitation to submit a Severe Service Needs Assessment or to apply for USHS: For persons currently invited to submit a severe service needs assessment for USHS, it is vital that this screening take place as soon as possible and before the person exits shelter. For single adults, immediately contact the YMCA RRH case manager/director assigned to your shelter.
✓ Client is not currently enrolled with RRH, submit a referral for Rapid Re-Housing assistance:: Referrals to RRH/Direct Housing are submitted via google docs. <i>If</i> the client's referral is accepted by RRH, they will contact the client to set-up a time to complete the intake. If the client does not complete the intake, they cannot be enrolled in the program. Please stress the importance of continuing to work to resolve their housing crisis and if they are contacted by RRH, the urgency to follow-up and attend all scheduled appointments. The client may be waitlisted for RRH, based on prioritization relative to other clients and RRH capacity. To support immediate goal setting and progress toward those rehousing goals the client should be assisted by referring agency with their IHSP

¹ Risk Factors for Homelessness: Evidence From a Population-Based Study; Katherine H. Shelton Ph.D.Pamela J. Taylor M.D.Adrian Bonner Ph.D.Marianne van den Bree Ph.D. (<https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/ps.2009.60.4.465>)

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Program Contact Information

Program	Contact Name	Phone Number	Email
Coordinated Access and Rapid Resolution	Kyra Crockett-Hodge	614-826-3630	kcrockett@huck-house.org
Faith Mission SSVF	Twana Roper	614-224-6617 x2144	troper@lssnetworkofhope.org
Homeless Families Foundation	Tiffany McCoy	614-461-9247 x102	tmccoy@homelessfamiliesfoundation.org
Homeless Families Foundation YHDP	Cory Kinnan	614-715-8658	ckinnan@homelessfamiliesfoundation.org
MCOT – Outreach	Thom Adams	614-449-1530 x213	TAdams@maryhaven.com
The Salvation Army	Brittani Perdue	614-358-2616	Brittani.Perdue@USE.SalvationArmy.Org
Veteran Coordinated Entry	John Roszkowski	614-439-8971	John.Roszkowski@va.gov
Volunteers of America Direct Housing	Betsy McGraw	614-977-1653	betsy.mcgraw@voago.org
Volunteers of America VFF	Issac Barton	614-629-9960 x1701	isaac.barton@voago.org
YMCA RRH	Beth Lonn	614-715-2030 x8312	beth.lonn@ymcacolumbus.org