Housing Resource Specialist Manual

v.1.1 November 2023

COSHN
CENTRAL OHIO STABLE HOUSING NETWORK

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION NETWORK

communityshelterboard
Until everyone has a place to call home

Central Ohio Stable Housing Network

The Central Ohio Stable Housing Network (COSHN) serves to promote a community-wide, coordinated approach to keep individuals and families stably housed. The resources of COSHN partners are invested and coordinated with the intent to further prevent evictions and homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County.

Community Shelter Board

Community Shelter Board leads a coordinated, community effort to make sure everyone has a place to call home. CSB is the collective impact organization driving strategy, accountability, collaboration, and resources to achieve the best outcomes for people facing homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. With the support of a compassionate community, our system of care resources homelessness prevention, shelter, street outreach, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Funding for Housing Resource Specialists and HPN administration by CSB is provided by the City of Columbus. Additional funding for HPN administration is provided by Nationwide Foundation, Battelle, Cardinal Health, the City of Columbus, Franklin County and private funders. Support for COSHN and HPN development and implementation is provided by Tom Albanese Consulting, LLC.

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Contents

Changes from Prior Version

Version History:

- v.1 November 2023 (Preliminary Draft, Not for Distribution)
- v.1 November 2023
- v.1.1 November 2023 (current)

Key changes from v.1 November 2023 (Draft Not for Distribution):

- Clarified that the web-based HPN Screening & Referral Tool is not yet operational. In lieu of the web-based tool, HRS staff should use the paper-based HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool, located at: https://www.csb.org/how-we-do-it/homelessness-prevention-network/hpn-resources.

- Added Appendix C: Housing Insecurity Heat Map Data

- Additional minor edits for clarity.

Key changes from v.1 November 2023:

- Removed the Center for Family Safety and Healing as a Sub-Population HRS for Domestic Violence Survivors.

Introduction

In 2015, CSB commissioned Abt Associates, a national research firm, to assess family homelessness trends in Franklin County and provide recommendations. Their report noted an overreliance on CSB as the 'go-to' system for families in crisis, highlighting the need for community leaders to develop preventive services to stabilize families and keep them from losing their homes further upstream.

The Homelessness Prevention Network (HPN) was born out of this research and the efforts that followed. (For a fuller history, see Appendix X). HPN was launched as a three-year demonstration pilot by Community Shelter Board in 2020, with support from the Nationwide Foundation, Battelle, and Cardinal Health. The goal: to provide more targeted housing crisis intervention for families and pregnant women facing imminent literal homelessness, thereby reducing demand for more costly and limited shelter and rehousing assistance.

The HPN demonstration concluded in mid-2023 and, based on the success and learnings from the pilot, was expanded in Fall 2023 with new investment from the City of Columbus for 28 trained and certified Housing Resource Specialists across a diverse range of partner agencies. Building on and further developing the core components of HPN, shown below, will allow our community to increase access to staff trained and skilled in "Housing Problem-Solving" - a nationally recognized, evidence-based practice for helping households who are experiencing or about to experience a housing emergency that relies first on reducing urgency through mediation and, when needed, expedited access to other assistance.

In Columbus and Franklin County, we call this "*Housing First Aid*" and "*Housing Urgent Care*". The expansion of HPN via new city-funded Housing Resources Specialists and other partners allows our community to grow a network of trained staff within targeted areas experiencing higher housing insecurity and with community partners people are already familiar with, so there is more *immediate and ready access to* **housing first aid and urgent care where and when needed** and *less reliance on our* community's Homeless Hotline and emergency shelters.
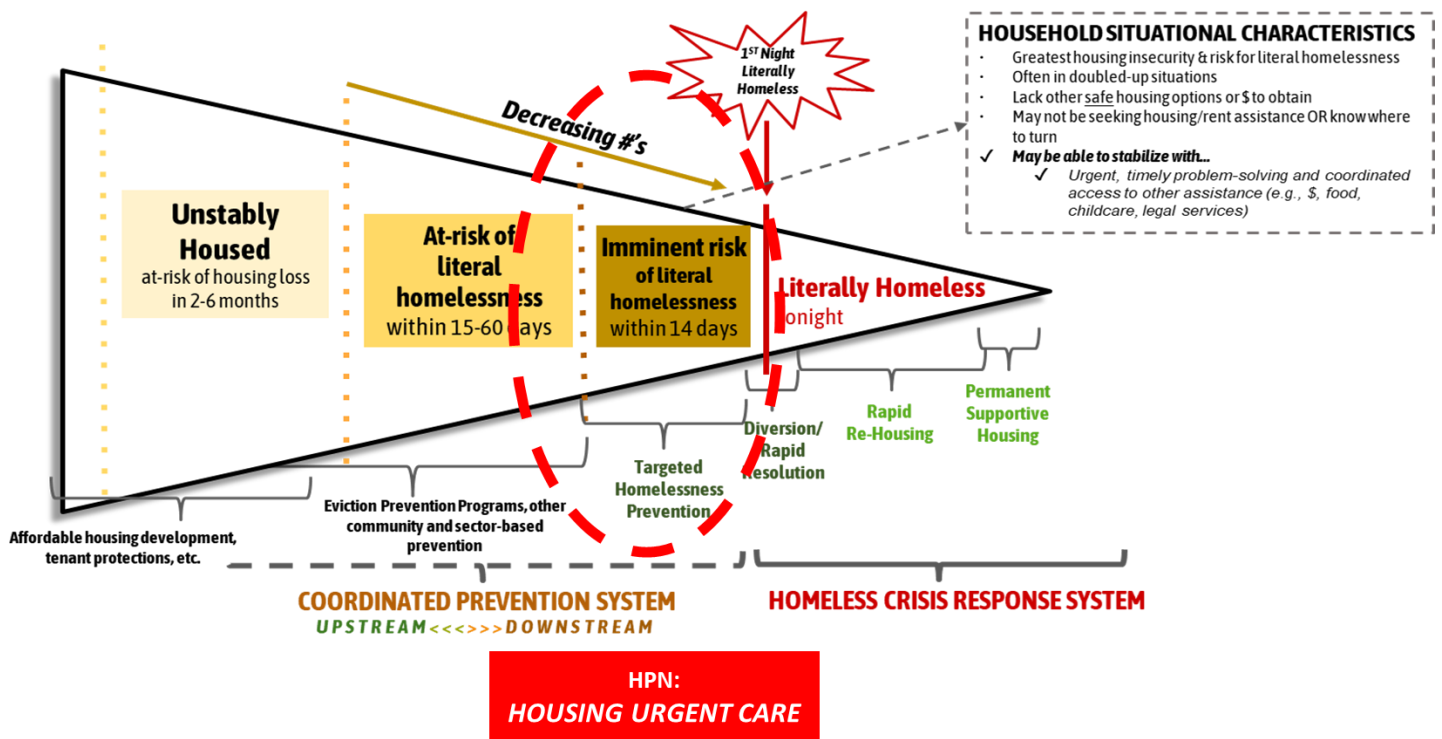
CORE PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES OF COORDINATED PREVENTION

We recognize that to be maximally impactful, prevention assistance should be **coordinated, efficient, effective, equitable and evidence-based/evidence-informed.** Our approach to preventing housing instability and homelessness adheres to these principles in the following ways:

- **Coordinated:** Common risk screening criteria are used in various settings across the community to identify people who are housing insecure, including those who are at greatest risk for literal homelessness and in need of targeted prevention and homeless diversion assistance. Coordinated screening and triage assures immediate, coordinated access to housing problem-solving and prevention-related resources, including prioritized access to assistance for people with more urgent and/or complex prevention needs.

    - o **Full spectrum approach:** Coordinated prevention approaches are intentionally designed to acknowledge and serve a diversity of housing situations and assistance needs, fluidly supporting the whole spectrum of needs from "upstream" (leaseholders) to "downstream" (non-leaseholders, those needing diversion/immediate rehousing or assistance to stabilize in-place).

- **Effective:** Prevention activities can help someone reduce or eliminate their housing crisis, including stopping someone from becoming homeless. To be effective, activities are easily found, accessed, and timely. Housing problem-solving, flexible financial assistance, and individualized housing search/stabilization supports are key features of effective prevention approaches.

- **Efficient:** Prevention activities seek to prevent literal homelessness using targeted approaches, such as funding Housing Resource Specialists to work at neighborhood agencies people are used to, and delivering effective activities to people who are very likely to become literally homeless unless they receive timely, individualized help.

    - o **No wrong door:** Prevention services are low barrier and accessible through every touch point in COSHN and beyond, including via mainstream and community-based organizations, healthcare providers, faith-based partners, recreation centers, library branches, etc. Many people are trained in basic housing first aid and know how to connect people with emergency or urgent housing needs to the right resource.

    - o **Targeted and timely:** Limited resources are targeted, when needed, to those with a clear and present risk for imminent literal homelessness and/or have other proven risk factors (e.g., history of homelessness) and vulnerabilities (e.g., fleeing violent partner). Services are offered in a nimble and timely fashion and, whenever possible, are provided the same day with flexible resources to meet urgent needs.

- **Equitable & Evidence-Based/Informed:** All services are rooted in evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that are formed through data-informed research and prioritization. These practices center on those most at-risk, assure services don't have needless barriers, and account for racial and other inequities using housing insecurity data, such as eviction filing data, zip code of last address for shelter entries, and public benefit (e.g., TANF) data.

    - o **Leading and improving based on experience:** COSHN planning, development, and implementation involves people with lived experience and expertise wherever possible and efforts are continually made to increase authentic involvement of and support for people with lived experience.

    - o **Trauma-informed and culturally aligned:** Services ensure client choice and service orientation, responding to housing crises using trauma-informed, crisis-oriented interventions, and ensuring services are provided in a culturally informed and aligned manner. Services seek to provide welcoming, safe space and ensure people are informed about the purpose of assistance and what to expect. All people are treated with dignity and respect and with accountability to reduce stress and further crisis.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION NETWORK

Partners in the Homelessness Prevention Network (HPN) serve as the *housing urgent care* part of the broader Central Ohio Stable Housing Network (COSHN). Together, we seek to ensure coordinated and timely access to trained Housing Resource specialists who can immediately offer strengths-based Housing Problem-Solving and facilitate immediate connection to other assistance to slow down or stop the housing crisis from becoming worse – that is, from becoming a homeless crisis where emergency shelter needed. Our collective goal is to reduce demand on the homeless crisis response system in Columbus and Franklin County. This is achieved by formalizing new collaborations with existing social service agencies and other places where individuals and families at highest risk can be quickly screened and assisted by a Housing Resource Specialist.

Primary HPN Components:

Brief Standardized Screening: Standardized homeless risk typology and brief screener, including web-based screening and referral tool.

Housing-Focused Problem-Solving: HPN partner staff trained on screening; strength-based, housing-focused problem solving; and connecting families and individuals to targeted and non-targeted community resources.

Response & Referral Guidance: Standardized response and referral guidance for staff based on risk level and customized for each access point and targeted populations.

Prioritized Access to Housing Stabilization Resources: Prioritized referrals among HPN partners highest risk families and individuals to target and expedite access to needed prevention resources.

Community Shelter Board (CSB) Role:
Community Shelter Board provides planning, development, and operational support for the Homelessness Prevention Network via CSB's HPN Manager, consultant and other staff support. CSB also operates the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) used by HRS staff to record basic data about assisted clients. **For questions about HPN contact Angelic Arana Varela, HPN Manager, aarana@csb.org.**

HPN Landing Page with Training Resources, Screening Tools, and Guidance:
https://www.csb.org/how-we-do-it/homelessness-prevention-network/hpn-resources

HPN Partner Roles:
The HPN strives to coordinate access to urgent and emergency housing assistance via a broad network of partners where households can be more readily screened, engaged, and connected to assistance. There are two basic roles for partners: screening and facilitating ACCESS to assistance and providing prevention-related SERVICES to immediately address urgent or emergency housing needs. We call these **HPN Access Points** and **HPN Service Providers**.

- **HPN Access Points:** Any type of entity (e.g., library branches, hospitals, food pantries, schools, eviction courts) encountering households who may be at-risk of housing instability or homelessness and that can provide light screening for households and connection to HPN assistance, when needed. Entities generally do not provide prevention-related services and/or are not able to engage in the system as an HPN Service Provider, but they often can be trained in and provide skilled Housing Problem-Solving assistance. HPN seeks as many Access Points as possible, with people in every corner of our community trained and able to offer basic "housing first aid" and connection to urgent and emergency housing assistance when needed.

- **HPN Service Providers (including HRS providers):** Social service agencies, healthcare providers, and other entities that intentionally or incidentally encounter people who are housing insecure and formally participate in HPN. This includes, at minimum, use of standardized brief screening tools to identify higher risk households and having trained staff who can offer individualized Housing Problem-Solving assistance who can also facilitate expedited access to other internal agency prevention assistance or other HPN partner prevention-related assistance when needed. **HPN Service Providers are also HPN Access Points.**

o   A sub-set of providers receive other federal, state, or local funding to provide more intensive *Targeted Homelessness Prevention* for specific sub-populations (e.g., families with minor children, pregnant women, youth, Veterans), inclusive of the intensive *shelter diversion* assistance offered through the Homeless Hotline for people seeking emergency shelter.

Access Points and Service Providers collaborate based on a shared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate referrals and prioritize access to assistance.

Housing Resource Specialists

Housing Resource Specialists (HRS) provide housing-focused, crisis intervention for people with the highest risk based on urgency and other vulnerabilities. HRS staff are trained and certified in *Housing Problem-Solving* and focus on housing crisis intervention, including offering immediate Housing Problem-Solving for the most urgent and complex situations.

HRS staff typically assist households one-time or for a brief period to assure immediate housing stabilization and connection to other supports, as needed and desired. *Generally,* HRS staff caseloads are dynamic, with a significant amount of HRS staff time focused on 1-time or very brief intervention to reduce imminent risk of literal homelessness and other critical vulnerabilities affecting housing stability. This ensures HRS staff remain available to respond to urgent referrals.

HRS staff receive, and document referrals using standardized HPN screening, referral, and triage protocols and are expected to work collaboratively with the CSB HPN Manager to receive, accept, and track referrals using the web based **HPN Screening & Referral Tool** (when operational). Information on this Tool can be found in the **HPN Screening, Referral, and Assistance Process** section, below.

Once a referral is submitted for HRS assistance, HRS staff should at minimum have direct contact with the referred head of household within two business days or the next business day if the referral is received the day before or on a weekend or holiday. The CSB HPN Manager with HRS Zone Leads and individual HRS providers will closely monitor the active HRS Standby List of referrals to ensure contact within this timeframe, consistent with the "Urgent Care" responsiveness expected across the HPN.

HRS Target Population & Criteria for Referral

The HPN serves all of Franklin County. Any household who meets HPN referral criteria may be referred for HRS assistance using the **HPN Screening & Referral Tool** (when operational). The Tool includes basic screening questions to determine the current risk for literal homelessness and other key vulnerabilities, based on COSHN's standardized **Housing Insecurity Scale,** and the Risk Levels outlined below. Please review **Appendix B: Housing Insecurity Scale: Risk Level Definitions & Indicators** for additional Risk Level screening details.

- RISK LEVEL 0: Stably Housed
- RISK LEVEL 1: Unstably Housed
- RISK LEVEL 2: At-Risk of Literal Homelessness within 15-60 Days
- RISK LEVEL 3: Imminent Risk of Literal Homelessness within 1-14 Days
- RISK LEVEL 4: Literally Homeless Tonight

To qualify for HRS referral, a household must be:
- Currently residing in Franklin County or became homeless in Franklin County is only temporarily absent due to recent loss of housing in Franklin County; **AND**
- Risk Level 3 or Risk Level 4: At imminent risk of literal homelessness tonight OR within 14 days or less "but for" HPN assistance; **OR**
- Risk Level 2: At risk of literal homelessness within 15-60 days "but for" HPN assistance **AND** has at least one of the following characteristics:
    - o   Have had one or more episodes of literal homelessness in the past;
    - o   Have a pregnant household member;
    - o   Are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence/abuse or other intimate partner violence/abuse.

Priority Zones

To ensure HPN is accessible and maximally effectives in areas with higher housing insecurity and homelessness, four Priority Zones have been established based on recent housing insecurity heat mapping by zip code.[1] Additional detail on the housing insecurity heat map is found in **Appendix C: Housing Insecurity Heat Map Data**.

HRS Referral Sources

Eligible households are referred for HPN Housing Resource Specialist assistance via the web based, brief **HPN Screening & Referral Tool** (when operational) or the paper based **HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool** (the latest version of the tool is located at https://www.csb.org/how-we-do-it/homelessness-prevention-network/hpn-resources). Submitted referrals are immediately added to an active HRS "standby" list, that includes all referrals not yet picked up by an HRS provider. The standby list is actively monitored by CSB's HPN Manager, in conjunction with Zone Leads, described below.

Households should be screened, when possible, before being referred to or otherwise engaged in intensive Housing Problem Solving and other individualized assistance from City of Columbus funded HRS staff. The following referral sources are used to access HPN Housing Resource Specialist assistance:

- **Access Point** referral partners that screen and refer prioritized households using the standardized web based **HPN Screening & Referral Tool** (when operational). As described above, these may be other human service providers (including other HRS agency programs), community partners (e.g., library staff, hospital staff, school staff), rental property partners (e.g., property management staff), and many other types of partners – all of whom encounter and are willing to screen and connect housing insecure households to HRS and other housing assistance.
  - o Access Points are being identified for each **Priority Zone** and additional areas by the City, CSB, and HRS agencies and may include a wide variety of partners, including existing HRS agency referral partners.
  - o Other staff and programs of an HRS agency should also serve as an Access Point and can make referrals using the HPN Screening & Referral Tool similar to other Access Point partners.
  - o Access Point referral partners may also receive basic training on and offer light or more intensive forms of Housing Problem-Solving.
- **Self-initiated requests for assistance and other referrals** not yet screened using HPN tools.
  - o Such contacts or referrals may come from other staff at the HRS agency, other community partners, or through self-directed contact made by a household seeking assistance.
  - o All *unscreened* referrals and contacts must be screened using the paper based **HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool** and added to the HPN referral pool by the receiving HRS staff.

    HRS staff may also complete this form, as needed – including after engaging a household already known to be at high risk and qualified for HRS assistance.

HRS assisted clients enrolled in HMIS should meet basic HRS risk/vulnerability criteria and have the risk level and vulnerability recorded in the HMIS Entry record. The **HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool** serves as back-up documentation for determining whether a household met HRS criteria prior to enrollment and entry in HMIS.

HRS staff are expected to encounter households facing varying degrees of risk and should ensure all households, including those who are not the focus for HRS assistance, are supported in connecting to available community resources and supports to address their housing need.

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[1] Zone order is based on a weighted rank by zip code using a combination of homeless system entry data, eviction filling data, and public benefit (SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID) data. Zones focus on zip codes with a weighted housing insecurity score of 20 or more. Zip code order for areas weighted over 20pts: 43232 [50], 43207 [45], 43229 [41], 43224 [39], 43228 [39], 43213 [36], 43223 [35], 43211 [34], 43219 [27], 43068 [25], 43227 [24], 43204 [24].

Housing Resource Specialist Types

- **General Public HRS:** HRS agencies identified below as "General Public HRS" provide *crisis oriented HRS assistance*, including individualized Housing Problem-Solving, resource navigation, and warm referrals for any qualified household referred from an HPN Access Point or self-referral from the general public, regardless of whether the household qualifies for other agency services.
  - o HRS agencies listed in each **Priority Zone** below serve as **General Public HRS for the zone**, meaning they have a physical location in the Zone with HRS staff who are available during defined hours to receive and assist priority referrals from Access Point referral partners.
    - ▪ **HRS Priority Zone Lead:** Responsible for managing the active standby list of referrals in concert with CSB HPN Manager and other General Public HRS agencies serving the Priority Zone. Zone Leads also assist with Access Point recruitment and support.
  - o HRS agencies listed under the **General Coverage** section below will provide crisis oriented HRS assistance for priority referrals from any Access Point or other HRS provider, with an emphasis on referrals for residents in non-prioritized zip codes.

- **Sub-Population HRS:** HRS agencies listed under "**Sub-Population HRS**" below include those agencies that also provide crisis oriented HRS assistance for unique subpopulations. Sub-Population HRS staff may also provide additional housing search and stabilization assistance using a Housing-Focused Case Management approach. Sub-Population HRS agencies may receive referrals from any Access Point or other HRS provider.

Priority Zones

PRIORITY ZONE 1	
East	
ZIP Codes:	43068, 43213, 43227, 43232
Neighborhoods:	Leawood, Mideast, Linwood, Beechwood, Walnut Ridge, Walnut Heights, Blacklick Estates, Pine Hills, Livingston-McNaughton, Edgewater Park South, Bernhard, The Fairway, Greenbriar Farm, Laurel Canyon, Far East, Eastmoor, Robinwood, Walnut Hills, Independence Village, Slate Ridge, Summit Station
Overlapping Suburbs:	Whitehall, Reynoldsburg, Pataskala, Canal Winchester, Obetz, Whitehall, Reynoldsburg
Access Points in Zone:	TBD
General Public HRS:	**Columbus Literacy Council (Zone Lead)**
	Jewish Family Services
ERA Outreach/ Intake:	Columbus Literacy Council

PRIORITY ZONE 2	
Central/Near East/Near Southeast	
ZIP Codes	43205, 43206, 43207
Neighborhoods:	South of Main. Franklin Park, Old Oaks, Old Towne East, Green Acres, Driving Park, Livingston Park, Reeb-Hosack, Vassor Village, Madison Mills, Merion Village, Innis Garden Village, Hungarian Village, Marion Franklin, Southern Orchards, Schumacher Place, German Village, Merion Village
Overlapping Suburbs:	Obetz
Access Points in Zone:	TBD
General Public HRS:	**Central Community House (Zone Lead)**
	Community Development for All People
	Compass
ERA Outreach/ Intake:	Central Community House
	Community Development for All People
	Compass

PRIORITY ZONE 3	
North	
ZIP Codes	43211, 43224, 43229
Neighborhoods:	Arlington Park, South Linden, East Linden, Clinton Estates, Maize-Morse, Walnut Creek, Framingham, North Linden, Walnut Creek, Salem Village, Forest Park East, Northland, Woodward Park
Overlapping Suburbs:	Upper Arlington, Worthington
Access Points in Zone:	TBD
General Public HRS:	**St. Stephen's Community House (Zone Lead)**
	Clintonville Beechwold Community Resources Center
ERA Outreach/ Intake:	Clintonville Beechwold Community Resources Center
	St. Stephen's Community House

PRIORITY ZONE 4	
West	
ZIP Codes:	43204, 43222, 43223, 43228
Neighborhoods:	Valleyview, Valleyview Heights, Wilshire Heights, South Central Hilltop, San Margherita, Marble Cliff Crossing, Scioto Woods, Canterbury, West Scioto, Westgate, SW Hilltop, Brookshire, Brookhollow, Highland West, Ponderosa, Rush Creek, West Columbus Park, Holly Hill, Lincoln Village South, Cherry Creek, Georgian Heights, North Hilltop, SW Columbus, Willowcreek, Highland West, Central Hilltop, South Franklinton, Merion Village, Franklinton, North Franklinton
Overlapping Suburbs:	Lincoln Village, Harrison West
Access Points in Zone:	CML_Hilltop Branch
General Public HRS:	**Gladden Community House (Zone Lead)**
	Homes on the Hill
	Jordan's Crossing
ERA Outreach/ Intake:	Homes on the Hill

General Coverage HRS

The following HRS agencies provide crisis oriented HRS assistance for priority referrals from Access Points and other HRS providers, with an *emphasis* on referrals for residents in non-prioritized zip codes within Columbus and Franklin County.

- Physicians Care Connection
- Columbus Literacy Council
- Jewish Family Services
- YMCA of Central Ohio
- Neighborhood Services Inc.

Sub-Population HRS

The following HRS agencies provide crisis oriented HRS assistance for priority referrals from Access Points and other HRS providers for residents with the following characteristics in any zip code in Columbus and Franklin County.

Code Violations/Emergency Vacates
• Broad Street Presbyterian (Compass)

Domestic Violence Survivors
• Community Development for All People
• Jewish Family Services
• Star House (TAY)
• YMCA of Central Ohio

Expectant Mothers
• Community Development for All People
• Home for Families
• Jewish Family Services
• Physicians CareConnection

Human Trafficking Survivors
• Freedom a La Cart

LGBTQ
• Equitas Health

New Americans, Refugees, and Immigrants
• Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center
• Columbus Literacy Council
• Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS)
• Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio
• Homes on the Hill
• Jewish Family Services
• Our Helper (*)
• Somali Community Link
• US Together (*)
• YMCA of Central Ohio

Seniors
• Central Community House: Main Office, Satellite
• Central Ohio Office on Aging
• Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center
• Community Development for All People
• Gladden Community House
• Homes on the Hill
• Jewish Family Services
• LifeCare Alliance
• Neighborhood Services INC
• Somali Community Link
• YMCA of Central Ohio

Transition Age Youth (TAY)
• Star House (TAY)

HPN Screening, Referral, and Assistance Process

HPN partners provide brief screening, Housing Problem-Solving, housing resource navigation, and expedited access to a wide array of assistance for individuals and families with minor children who are imminently at-risk of literal homelessness tonight (Risk Level 4) or within 14 days or less (Risk Level 3). Additionally, those at risk of literal homelessness within 15-60 days (Risk Level 2) may receive assistance if they:

- Have had one or more episodes of literal homelessness in the past;
- Have a pregnant household member;
- Are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence/abuse or other intimate partner violence/abuse.

HPN Service Providers and Access Points should follow Steps 1 to 4 below to screen, assist and connect high risk households to services to prevent literal homelessness.

HPN Data Collection:

- **HPN Access Points:** utilize the web based **HPN Screening and Referral Tool** (when operational) to collect basic client information and make an expedited referral, when needed, to an HPN Service Provider.

- **HPN Service Providers:** utilize the paper based **HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool** and, for households who qualify and are assisted by HRS staff, the CSB Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) following CSB HMIS program data collection practices for assisted ("enrolled") households.

   o When needing to make an expedited referral to another HPN Service Provider, utilize the web based *HPN Screening and Referral Tool* (when operational).

For questions about HPN Screening and Triage, including the *HPN Screening and Referral Tool* contact Angelic Arana Varela, HPN Manager, aarana@csb.org.

Step 1: Housing Insecurity Risk Screening

Housing insecurity risk screening is used to quickly identify households who are imminently at-risk of literal homeless within a defined period (e.g., the next 14 days), meaning households who will soon exhaust all safe housing options and require emergency shelter to avoid being unsheltered.

HPN Access Points and Service Providers are strongly encouraged to incorporate brief Housing Insecurity Risk Screening in all facets of programs and services, including initial and ongoing contacts with assisted households, to identify and assist those who are at high risk of literal homelessness. Such households may benefit from immediate housing problem-solving assistance and potentially expedited access to other assistance (e.g., financial assistance, food, childcare, etc.) to avoid literal homelessness and stabilize housing.

Screening can occur at any point of engagement with someone presenting for agency services or otherwise engaged with an HPN partner. **Screening should be done in stages**, including use of basic questions to initially identify households who may potentially be at-risk.

Examples:
"Are you homeless or are you worried you may become homeless in the next few weeks?"
"Is the place where you're staying safe for your and your family?"

Such questions can lead to additional questions, or a referral to HRS staff in certain circumstances. In all cases, when HRS staff receive a referral, they must determine whether the household is a priority for HRS assistance and meets HRS criteria.

Access Points should refer eligible households to HPN.   This should be done by electronic referral, via the web based **HPN Screening and Referral Tool** (found at: https://forms.zoho.com/communityshelterboard/form/RentalApplication).

HRS agencies should complete the 1-page, paper based **HPN Housing Resource Specialist Screening Tool to ensure eligibility before scheduling an inward Housing Problem Solving conversation.**

When a referral is submitted using the HPN Screening and Referral Tool, the appropriate zone lead will be notified via email and will receive a PDF of the submission so that they can refer the household to the appropriate HRS agency. Once a zone lead assigns a household to a specific HRS agency, the HRS for that agency will be notified via email and will receive a PDF of the submission. At that time, the agency receiving the referral is expected to contact the client within 2 business days. The Zone Lead will audit, as needed, the result of any referrals assigned. The audit may be as frequent as once a week. The result of a referral will be designated as Appointment Scheduled, Not Eligible, Self-Resolved or Unable to Contact.

Step 2: Housing Problem-Solving
Housing Problem-Solving is used by HPN Access Point and Service Provider staff to immediately engage high risk families (including pregnant women) in solution-focused, guided conversation to identify available safe housing options and/or resources to secure housing and reduce risk of literal homelessness.

Housing Problem-Solving is the first and most important form of assistance available from HPN Access Points and Service Providers and involves a more comprehensive exploration of the household's current housing situation, safety issues, options and resources that could be useful to stabilize the household or otherwise help them find alternative, safe housing arrangements. Housing Problem-Solving typically also involves examining other resources and assistance available from the HPN Access Point or Service Provider and/or through another HPN Service Provider that the household might access to help stabilize current housing or secure new housing.

All HRS staff are required to be trained and certified in Housing Problem-Solving.

Step 3: HPN Prioritized Assistance
In addition to Housing Problem-Solving, expedited access to other assistance (e.g., flexible financial assistance, food, childcare, etc.) is offered **when available** by HRS Service Providers when needed to address urgent needs and help stabilize housing. Information about provider programs and resources that can be accessed on a prioritized basis is being developed, including protocols to access such resources across HPN partners. HRS Service Providers are encouraged to offer prioritized access to other HRS agency programs and services as needed for high-risk cases in need of support beyond Housing Problem-Solving.

Stage 4: Additional Follow-up Support
HRS staff offer additional information, referral, and follow-up support depending on the Housing Insecurity Risk Level following housing problem-solving and any additional assistance immediately accessed. The following are basic guidelines on next steps. More detailed guidance is found in the **HPN Response & Referral Guide** (forthcoming).

- ✓ **If RISK LEVEL 4:** Immediately refer to Homeless Hotline for assistance to access shelter: 1-614-274-7000. Continue to offer support until connection with **emergency shelter and/or other emergency services** (e.g., Street Outreach) is completed.

- ✓ **If RISK LEVEL 3 or RISK LEVEL 2 with other vulnerability factors:** Continue to offer housing problem-solving, support in accessing additional HPN prioritized prevention assistance, if available and needed.

- ✓ **If RISK LEVEL 2, 1 or 0:** Continue to offer housing problem-solving assistance and connection to other assistance or resources, as needed and desired.

Appendix A: Key Building Block Concepts

The following concepts are working definitions based on established frameworks for prevention, particularly those arising from the public health sector, that are useful for a shared language, understanding, and action to address all forms of housing insecurity.

Housing Insecurity

"Housing insecurity is a measure of how close a person or family is to being homeless, determined by factors such as being behind on mortgage or rent, making multiple moves, living in a shelter, and experiencing homelessness."[2] The **Housing Insecurity Scale** below is based in part on federal at-risk definitions for HUD ESG and VA SSVF that identify people who are most at–risk based on their current circumstances and other empirically-based vulnerabilities, such as prior experiences of homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness. It also means providing those who have been homeless with the necessary resources and support to stabilize their housing, enhance integration and social inclusion, and ultimately reduce the risk of the recurrence of homelessness.

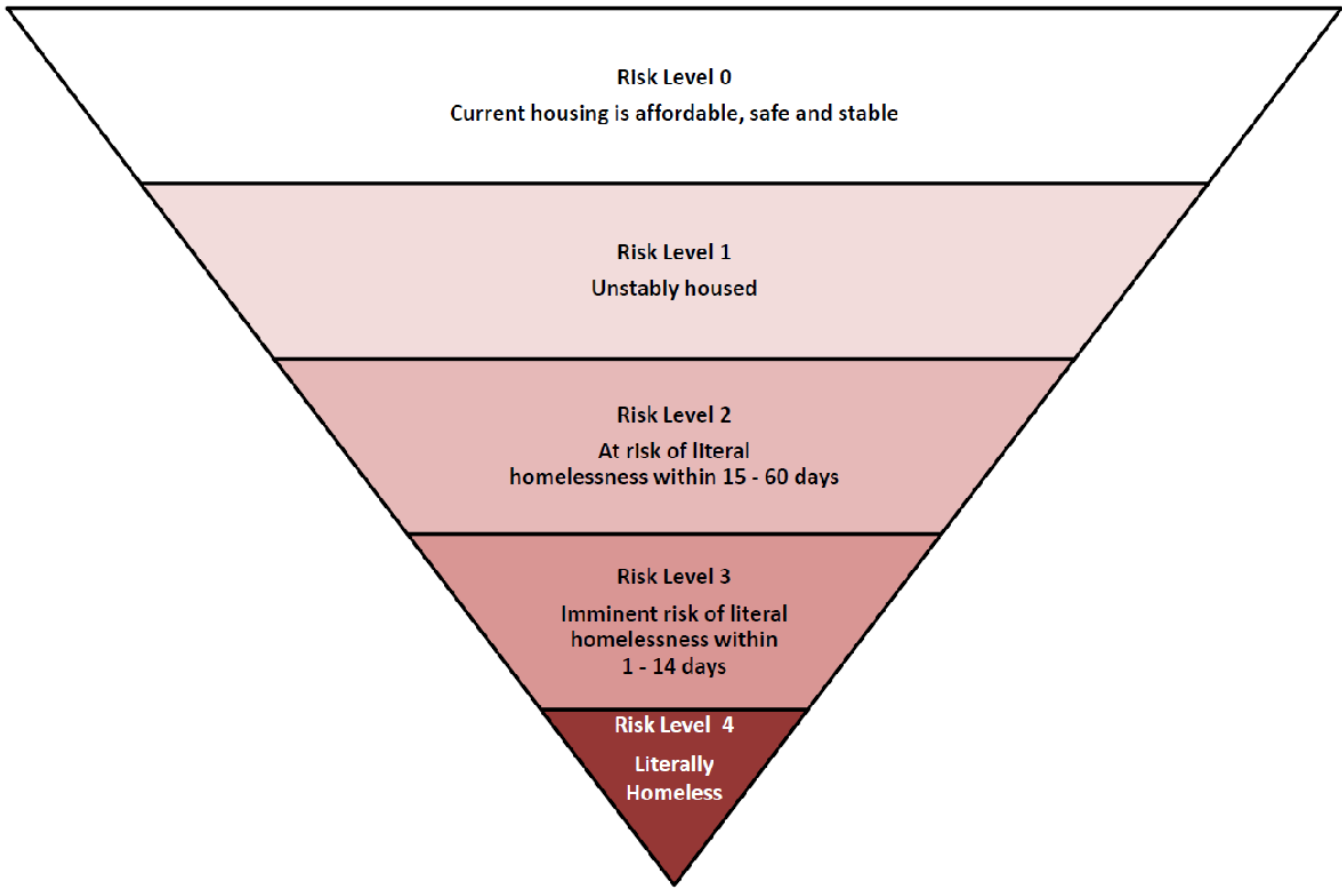Three general types of **Homelessness Prevention** (HP):

- **Primary:** Structural-level initiatives that apply to everyone, to reduce the risk of homelessness and build protective factors.

- **Secondary:** Intervention strategies aimed at those who are at imminent risk of homelessness (i.e., received an eviction notice) as well as those who have recently become homeless, with the aim of avoiding homelessness or moving out of homelessness as quickly as possible.

  - **Targeted Homelessness Prevention and Diversion** are forms of secondary homelessness prevention that targets assistance to households at greatest risk for literal homelessness within a defined period (e.g., 14 days or less) and who lack other safe housing options and resources to avoid literal homelessness "but for" timely and individualized prevention assistance.
  - Targeted HP relies on standardized risk and vulnerability screening to identify people most at-risk for literal homelessness. Homelessness Prevention activities funded under Federal **Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)** and **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Programs** are targeted based on federal eligibility requirements.

- **Tertiary:** Prevention initiatives that support individuals and families who have previously experienced homelessness to ensure that it doesn't happen again.[3]

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[2] Boston Medical Center, Housing Security | Boston Medical Center (bmc.org) (accessed 06.09.2023)

[3] Stephen Gaetz & Erin Dej. (2017). A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Appendix B: Housing Insecurity Scale: Risk Level Definitions & Indicators

Risk Level		Living Situation	Housing Options & Resources
0	Stably Housed	• Current housing is safe; AND • Current housing is stable for the foreseeable future (e.g., sufficient income to pay rent and utilities, able to stay with host family/friend indefinitely).	Has housing options, financial resources, and/or support networks to maintain or obtain a safe place to stay for *foreseeable* future.
1	Unstably Housed	• Current housing is safe; AND • No material risk of imminent risk of literal homelessness (i.e., not Risk Level 2-4); AND • Is currently experiencing general housing insecurity due to housing cost burden, housing conditions, frequent unplanned moves, and/or other characteristics and barriers indicative of higher risk for future literal homelessness. May be at-risk of housing loss in 2-6 months.	Has housing options, financial resources, and/or support networks to maintain or obtain a safe place to stay for *foreseeable* future.
2	At-Risk of Literal Homelessness (within 15-60 Days)	• Current housing is safe; AND • Must leave current housing within 15-60 days (e.g., due to court-ordered eviction, landlord-issued eviction, foreclosure, safety or health risk, host family/friend limitation, etc.); OR • Must leave an institution (e.g., hospital, jail, treatment facility) within 15-60 days.	Does not have other housing options, financial resources, and/or support networks to maintain or obtain a safe place to stay *after* the next 15-60 days.
3	Imminent Risk of Literal Homelessness (within 1-14 Days)	• Current housing is safe; AND • Must leave current housing within 14 days (e.g., due to court-ordered eviction, foreclosure, imminent safety or health risk, host family/friend request to leave, family conflict, etc.); OR • Must leave an institution (e.g., hospital, jail, treatment facility) within 14 days.	Does not have other housing options, financial resources, and/or support networks to maintain or obtain a safe place to stay after the next 14 days.
4	Literally Homeless Tonight	• Is currently literally homeless and continues to have no other safe housing option tonight outside of available emergency shelter, Safe Haven, or transitional housing options; OR • Must leave current housing today (e.g., due to court-ordered eviction, foreclosure, immediate safety or health risk, host family/friend request to leave, etc.); OR • Must leave an institution (e.g., hospital, jail, treatment facility) today.	Does not have other housing options, financial resources, and/or support networks to maintain or obtain a safe place to stay tonight

Risk Level 0
Current housing is affordable, safe and stable

Risk Level 1
Unstably housed

Risk Level 2
At risk of literal
homelessness within 15 - 60 days

Risk Level 3
Imminent risk of literal
homelessness within
1 - 14 days

Risk Level 4
Literally
Homeless

Appendix C: Housing Insecurity Heat Map Data

The following heat map was updated in June 2023 using the following data:

- Total households entering emergency shelter by zip code of last permanent housing address for the period 01/01/2022 - 03/31/2023 (source: Community Shelter Board).
- Total rental eviction filings by zip code with Franklin County Municipal Court for the period 1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022 (source: Franklin County Municipal Court).
- Total public assistance recipients by zip code receiving SNAP (food stamps), TANF, and Medicaid program recipients as of April 2023 (source: Franklin County Department of Job & Family Services).

The table below provides an overall summary of the heat map analysis conducted by COSHN in June 2023. The highest ranking zip codes were used to determine HPN Priority Zones, as described in this manual.

Zip Code	ZIP Code Name	2020 Population	C1 Neighborhoods	System Entry Rank	Weighted Rank	Eviction Filings Rank	Weighted Rank	SNAP/TANF /MEDICAID Rank	Weighted Rank	OVERALL WEIGHTED SCORE
43232	Cols/Blacklick	42201	Southeast	4	17	1	20	3	13	50
43207	Cols/Obetz/Grover	45144	Southside	3	18	6	15	4	12	45
43229	Cols/Worthington	46347	Morse/Northland	14	7	2	19	1	15	41
43224	Columbus	38699	Morse/Northland	9	12	5	16	5	11	39
43228	Columbus	50737	Hilltop	13	8	4	17	2	14	39
43213	Whitehall	30444		12	9	3	18	7	9	36
43223	Columbus	27366	Franklinton	1	20	12	9	10	6	35
43211	Columbus	21600	Linden	2	19	11	10	11	5	34
43219	Columbus	27123	Northeast	10	11	13	8	8	8	27
43068	Reynoldsburg	51836		16	5	8	13	9	7	25
43227	Cols/Whitehall	21340	Southeast	11	10	10	11	13	3	24
43204	Columbus	42104	Hilltop			7	14	6	10	24
43215	Columbus	12790		5	16					16
43206	Columbus	21864	Near South/Southside	8	13	18	3			16
43004	Blacklick	22727		6	15					15
43205	Columbus	12272	Near South	7	14					14
43110	Canal Winchester	33847		19	2	9	12			14
43123	Grove City	58424		18	3	17	4	12	4	11
43230	Gahanna	51161		20	1	14	7	15	1	9
43026	Hilliard	54017				16	5	14	2	7
43201	OSU area	35495		15	6					6
43081	Westerville	55991				15	6			6
43203	Columbus	8108	Near East	17	4					4
43220	Columbus	24989				19	2			2
43235	Columbus	38493				20	1			1