

## METHODS OF OPERATION

Annual and on-going grants from HUD specify the amount of S+C funds available for each of the three regions within the state. Within each region, there are mental health agencies responsible for the local administration of the S+C program.

DHHS contracts with one Central Administering Agency (CAA) responsible for the oversight of the SPC program. Shalom House, Inc. is the current CAA.

The LAA's are encouraged to develop and work with a network of providers, service professionals, DHHS, and consumers in the maintenance and ongoing development of service partnerships. Although the LAA is ultimately the responsible party for ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines regarding the administration of units under S+C, the tasks of a local service partnership may include:

- a. providing outreach to mental health consumers to alert them to the availability of services;
- b. assessing consumer needs at the local level;
- c. targeting locally appropriate priorities;
- d. assisting recipients in locating, securing, and establishing themselves in safe and decent housing;
- e. assisting in the arrangement and the provision of community support services;
- f. establishing and maintaining relations with local landlords, public housing authorities, and property managers;
- g. providing other services aimed at maintaining adults with serious mental illness in mainstream housing in the community;
- h. proposing modifications to the above procedures to increase access to housing options with approval of DHHS.

### The Local Administering Agency:

- 1) LAA receives a SPC application from the Client or Caseworker or local service partnership, verifies income and eligibility requirements, and approves or denies the application.
  - (a) If approved, LAA sends a letter to the applicant, informing the applicant that he/she has 30 days in which to initiate subsidy
  - (b) If denied, LAA sends a letter to the applicant, stating the reason for denial and informing the applicant of DHHS Housing Subsidy Appeals Procedure.
- 2) If applicable, LAA receives written extension request from service provider or client and may grant up to three 30 day extensions. No applicant may be given more than 120 days to find suitable housing. Applicants who have not initiated subsidy within 120 days of program acceptance must reapply.
- 3) LAA completes initial Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections on units located by recipients, informs the landlord and/or property manager of any deficiencies and/or needed repairs, and establishes a timeline for completion of repairs and/or deficiencies.

- (a) All households must receive a lead paint pamphlet, *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home* published jointly by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and HUD.
  - (b) All households are encouraged to sign a lead paint disclosure form with their respective landlord, **not the LAA**.
- 4) LAA negotiates unit price that meets HUD's 'rent reasonableness' test and FMR standards with landlord and/or property manager, if applicable.
- 5) LAA conducts initial certification with recipient.
  - (a) Move-in form(s) and;
  - (b) Rental Calculation Form completed
  - (c) Income Verification form(s) and;
  - (d) Housing Quality Standard form completed and signed;
  - (e) Release of Information Form(s) signed. Use agency release form. If your agency does not have a standard HIPAA compliant release please use the sample release. and;
  - (f) Tenant Responsibility Form signed and attachments distributed
- 6) LAA executes Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the landlord/property manager.
- 7) It is recommended that all S+C recipients enter into a Lease or Rental Agreement with their landlord. Participants are not required to enter a long-term lease but must sign an initial occupancy agreement for a term of at least one month. This agreement is automatically renewable upon expiration, except on prior notice by either the tenant or landlord.
- 8) LAA prepares the Monthly Request Form to request funds from the Central Administering Agency (CAA). This form is sent electronically and it must be password protected. Note, LAA must submit to the CAA copies of the following documents before the CAA will release any Housing Assistance Payments:
  - a) Rent calculation form and backup documentation
  - b) Verification of eligibility requirements via 3<sup>rd</sup> party
  - c) Completed and Passed HQS inspection form
  - d) And other documents as may be required by the CAA and DHHS.
- 9) LAA disburses monthly HAP to landlords/property managers in accordance with HAP Contracts.
- 10) LAA completes interim certifications with recipients, as necessary.
- 11) LAA completes annual re-certification:
  - (a) Rental Calculation Form completed and;
  - (b) Income Verification form(s)
  - (c) Housing Quality Standard form completed and signed; and
  - (d) Release of Information Forms signed. Use your agency release form. If you agency does not have a standard HIPAA compliant release please use the sample release and;
  - (e) Tenant Responsibility Form signed, and;

(f) Support Services Survey and;

- 12) LAA receives payments (i.e., loan, security, damage) from recipients and issues receipts.
- 13) LAA reports to the CAA on the payment activities of recipients on a monthly basis.
- 14) LAA processes move-out inspections, as applicable. (See Section 10, Housing Quality Standards)
- 15) LAA processes Transfers.
- 16) LAA processes Termination of Subsidy Forms and letters, as applicable, to include a copy of the DHHS Subsidy Appeals Procedure.
- 17) Each Local Administrative Agent and/or Sponsor shall have on staff a person who holds a certificate as a Housing Quality Standards Inspector. In addition, each Local Administrative Agent and/or Sponsor shall have on staff a person who holds a certificate from a nationally recognized training organization in one or more of the following: Asset Management, Assisted Housing Real Estate Management, Property Management, HUD Property/Asset Management, ,or other approved relevant, certified trainings.
- 18) LAA establishes and maintains relations with local landlords, property managers, shelters, General Assistance Offices, Social Service Providers, and Public Housing Authorities.
- 19) LAA provides a written response and provide a written copy of the DHHS Housing Appeals Procedure to any past, present, or pending applicant or tenant for any service requested in writing, that it may turn down, reject, refuse, or deny in the administration of Shelter Plus Care.
- 20) LAA maintains complete S+C files on all recipients. Denied or closed files must be retained for the greater of 8 years or the time frame put forth in the LAA agency file destruction policy. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.

## The Central Administering Agency

1. Coordinate with DHHS to develop forms and procedures for use in the disbursement and accounting of funds to the LAA and to the DHHS.
2. Provide training to LAA's involved in the administration of rental assistance.
3. Assure that LAA's receive notification of HQS and other relevant training.
4. Provide consultation and assistance to LAA's and DHHS to maintain compliance with local, state, and federal housing related policies, rules, regulations, and statutes.
5. Report and reconcile each LAA's activity to DHHS on a monthly basis on all activity.
6. Receive and consolidate information from each of the regional LAA's on a monthly basis.
7. Report and reconcile to the DHHS monthly on activities for each LAA and on a consolidated basis.
8. Maintain files of activities related to S+C.
9. Comply with additional priorities and requests from the DHHS.
10. Disburse approved Housing Assistance Payments to LAA's on a monthly basis, provided that funding has been disbursed or authorized by the Department and that the LAA's have provided appropriate and timely documentation. Specifically, prior to release of Housing Assistance Payment funds to LAA's, the LAA must have on file with the CAA the following documents: rent calculation form and backup documentation; Verification of eligibility requirements via 3<sup>rd</sup> party; passed HQS inspection form; as described in the Paperwork Compliance Policy; and other requirements contained within the SPC Manual.
11. Track and reconcile monthly: all move-ins, move-outs, unit transfers, annual certifications, interim certifications and other activities that the Department may specify, and report that information on a consolidated basis to each LAA and to the Department by the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) day of the following month.
12. Conduct Periodic on-site program and tenant file review and monitoring of LAA compliance with Program Manuals in conjunction with DHHS staff. Within 30 days CAA will generate a formal report to include any findings, concerns, or corrections to the LAA with a copy to the Department. Frequency of such review and monitoring visits may increase or decrease at the discretion of the CAA and the Department.

