

## Housing Assistance Screening Tool (HAST) SINGLE ADULTS Companion Guide

The Housing Assistance Screening Tool (HAST) version 1.1, effective 8/5/2019, replaces 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** using the standardized Housing Assistance Screening tool and referral processes for rapid re-housing (RRH) and permanent supportive housing (PSH) available through the Unified Supportive Housing System (USHS).

### Why are we doing the HAST?

The Housing Assistance Screening Tool is used to identify the client's prior use of re-housing assistance (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 or 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) Individuals and families not included in the above, including unaccompanied youth and parenting youth age 18-24, and their key household characteristics and re-housing barriers to determine if the individual or family is a target population for rapid re-housing assistance. Rapid re-housing providers then score and prioritize clients who are targeted for rapid re-housing assistance based on the information from the HAST. Clients who are targeted for RRH and have the highest score are then offered RRH when a program slot becomes available.
- 5) Individuals and families who are not in one of the above categories and who 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><b>Veteran:</b> 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, John Roszkowski at <a href="mailto:John.Roszkowski@va.gov">John.Roszkowski@va.gov</a> 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><b>RRH:</b> 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. Please contact the RRH director associated with your shelter.</p> <p>For those persons who respond <i>Linked with RRH in last 90 days or Linked with RRH provider in last 12 months</i>, 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 appeal this decision following the formal appeals process.</p> <p>To contact RRH Directors: Danielle Otte <a href="mailto:danielle.otte@ymcacolumbus.org">danielle.otte@ymcacolumbus.org</a>, Joh Anna Jackson <a href="mailto:johanna.jackson@ymcacolumbus.org">johanna.jackson@ymcacolumbus.org</a>, Lori Corey <a href="mailto:lori.corey@ymcacolumbus.org">lori.corey@ymcacolumbus.org</a></p>
<p><b>USHS:</b> 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 VA” in the <i>Notes Preview</i> section.</p>
<p><b>Street Outreach:</b> 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 “<i>MCOT Outreach</i>” and no <i>Exit Date</i>, meaning they are still open. PROGRAM CONTACT: Thomas Adams, Outreach Program Coordinator, Maryhaven Engagement Center email: <a href="mailto:tadams@maryhaven.com">tadams@maryhaven.com</a> or phone 614-449-1530 x213</p>

### Part 2: CLIENT INTERVIEW SECTION

**Scripter 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.*
- **Severe, Persistent and 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 severe and persistent or a serious health condition.

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- **Intimate Partner 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. 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 arrest make finding housing more difficult. 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.
- **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.

**IF PERSON IS 25 OR OLDER OR IF ANYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD IS 25 OR OLDER, STOP.**

### 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/courses/lgbt-youth-homelessness-101/>
- **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

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- **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 be able to 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.

✓ <b>Client is a Veteran:</b> 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, John Roszkowski at 614-439-8971
✓ <b>Client currently linked with a RRH provider:</b> 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.
✓ <b>Client has invitation to submit a Vulnerability Assessment or to apply for USHS:</b> For persons currently invited to submit a vulnerability screening for USHS, it is vital that this screening take place as soon as possible and before the person exits shelter. Immediately contact the YMCA RRH case manager/director assigned to your shelter OR schedule an appointment to complete with your staff member that is a PSH Trained-Assessor to assist client with USHS.
✓ <b>Client meets one or more of the following targeting criteria for Rapid Re-Housing assistance:</b> Referrals to the RRH program 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.
✓ <b>Client does not meet above and will be assisted with their IHSP by the following staff:</b> Please let the client know their contact person at the shelter, the frequency they will be expected to engage with this staff person, and any other pertinent information such as phone number and office hours for that staff member.

<sup>1</sup> 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>)