



Administering and Managing Housing Support

Manual for Counties and Tribes

October 2022



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Manual Overview

This Manual is a resource for counties and tribes to use when administering Housing Support and managing approved Housing Support providers. It will guide counties and tribes through an introduction to Housing Support, important areas of consideration when starting or expanding Housing Support resources, best practices for quality assurance, and additional resources. This Manual is not legal advice. Any legislative changes to the Minnesota Housing Support Act (Chapter 256I) overrides information referenced in this document.

Housing Support Basics

What is Housing Support?

Housing Support, formerly known as Group Residential Housing (GRH), is a state-funded income supplement to help older adults and people with disabilities who have low incomes pay for their housing expenses. In order to prevent and/or reduce homelessness or institutionalization and promote housing stability, Housing Support provides financial support for rent, utilities, household needs, food, and services for eligible individuals. Housing Support is the largest housing program operated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (the “Department”), distributing over \$187,000,000 to support more than 28,000 people during state fiscal year 2022 alone. Roughly 28% of program recipients currently receive Housing Support in their own leased housing rather than a group setting.

When is Housing Support authorized?

Housing Support is authorized when the:

1. Person is eligible to receive Housing Support
2. Provider has an active Housing Support Agreement with the county or tribe
3. Place satisfies all settings requirements (i.e., lease, applicable licensure or registration, completed habitability inspection)

How is Housing Support paid?

There are two types of payments for Housing Support: room/board and supplemental services. Room/board is paid all of the time when a person is receiving Housing Support. Supplemental services are available when the setting and the person are eligible to receive it. Payment rates are adjusted annually and included in the Housing Support Agreement for the upcoming state fiscal year. When Housing Support is authorized, it is paid to a vendor on the person’s behalf. If the person has income, they may have an individual obligation to pay some of their housing expenses as well.

Who is eligible to receive Housing Support?

A person is eligible to receive Housing Support room/board if they:

1. are age 18 or older with a certified disability or disabling condition or are age 65 or older
2. have low income and low assets
3. reside in a setting authorized by the county or tribe with a Housing Support Agreement

To qualify to receive Housing Support supplemental services, a person must also require assistance in two of the following four areas:

1. Tenancy supports
2. Supportive services
3. Employment supports
4. Health supervision services

In order for a person to receive Housing Support supplemental services, they must receive Housing Support room/board. Supplemental services include, but are not limited to, oversight and up to 24-hour supervision, medication reminders, assistance with transportation, arranging for meetings and appointments, arranging for medical and social services, and connecting people to the supplemental services identified in the [Professional Statement of Need](#) (DHS-7122). Supplemental services are only authorized in certain settings. Additional services may be covered if authorized in statute for a specific residence or category of housing.

In order to determine eligibility for Housing Support room/board, a person must submit a [Combined Application Form](#) (DHS-5223) to their local county or tribal social services agency via paper application or online at mnbenefits.mn.gov. Additionally, if the person is under age 65, a [Professional Statement of Need](#) (DHS-7122) or [Request for Medical Opinion](#) (DHS-2114) is necessary to establish the presence of a disabling condition if they don't already have a certified disability (through the Social Security Administration or State Medical Review Team [SMRT]). County or tribal designees are people named by the county or tribe as allowed to complete the Professional Statement of Need for Housing Support purposes. For more information about designees, please contact the local county or tribe.

Where can Housing Support be used?

As noted above, Housing Support is only authorized when there is an active Housing Support Agreement in place with the county, tribe, or multicounty collaborative (the "Agency"). Housing Support Agreements outline statutory requirements, provider and service delivery standards, and payment rates for the corresponding state fiscal year. The Department updates Housing Support Agreements annually, sending them to the Agency to execute with providers. There are two different types of Housing Support Agreements used depending on the approved setting: Group and Community-Based.

Group Housing Support Agreements

Group Housing Support Agreements are utilized in settings where a Minnesota Department of Human Services or Minnesota Department of Health license or registration is required (unless it is tribe-certified housing). In these settings, meals are provided on-site and four or more people can reside at the approved location. Some examples of settings falling under this type of agreement include:

- Adult Foster Care
- Assisted Living
- Board and Lodge

Community-Based Housing Support Agreements

Providers working in supportive housing settings sign Community-Based Housing Support Agreement. In these settings, a lease and a [Habitability Inspection](#) (DHS-7123) are required, and a person typically receives food support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Providers ensure that clients have access to some type of supportive service to maintain housing stability. People may live in scattered-site or site-based programs. Some examples of settings falling under this type of agreement include:

- Supportive Housing
- Long-term Homeless Supportive Housing
- Metro Demonstration Project

Note: Depending on the types of settings the provider operates, the provider may be required to sign both Group and Community-Based Agreements. A [Housing Support Settings Characteristics Chart \(DHS-8292\)](#) is available to further clarify differences between setting types.

Administration and Management of Housing Support

Housing Support is a state run, Agency-administered program authorized under the Minnesota Housing Support Act ([Minnesota Statutes Chapter 256I](#)). Agencies enter into Housing Support Agreements directly with providers located within their respective boundaries. Agencies are authorized to develop quality control programs in an effort to manage and review provider or vendor performance via Housing Support Agreements. Any quality control process established by a county does not apply to tribally-run Housing Support programs, even if the tribal area exists within a county's limits.

State: Oversight and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the state are vested in Minn. Stat. §256I. The Department has the authority to:

- Supervise and monitor the administration of Housing Support activities, including but not limited to, assuring timely and accurate distribution of benefits, completeness of service, and quality program management.
- Suspend or terminate Housing Support Agreements immediately when the health or welfare of the housing or service recipients is endangered, or when the Department has reasonable cause to believe that the vendor has breached a material term of the Agreement.
- Immediately terminate Housing Support Agreements when a curable material breach of the Agreement by a vendor is not remedied within a specified timeframe.

The Behavioral Health, Housing, and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Administration's Housing and Support Services Division is responsible for Housing Support oversight and operations, including developing legislative proposals to improve its efficiency and efficacy. Division staff also provide technical assistance to counties, tribes, providers, and community partners. Division staff may be contacted at dhs.dhs.grh@state.mn.us.

Multi-Departmental Approach for Agencies

Housing Support is a program touching nearly every area of an Agency. Housing Support is an income supplement program distributed through financial assistance units, and contract managers oversee the execution of Housing Support Agreements. The Department authorizes an Agency to develop quality control programs in an effort to manage and review provider performance under Housing Support Agreements. However, developing and integrating systemic provider performance processes has been a challenge. State resources are not allocated to Agencies to develop such programs outside of grant opportunities (see [Community Living Infrastructure Grant](#)). As such, Agencies may resource quality control and oversight programs differently across Minnesota.

While a multi-department approach is optimal for Housing Support management, the reality is that many Agencies do not have the resources to commit to robust administration efforts. That being said, in order to effectively administer, manage, and monitor Housing Support at an Agency level, it requires investment and input from multiple units including (but not limited to):

Agency Unit	Housing Support-Related Responsibilities
Financial Assistance Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process applications, change reports, and renewals• Often first-line for flagging questionable business practices or applications• Receive recipient complaints and or identifies concerns
Triage Teams/Intake Social Workers and Financial Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help people identify available Housing Support resources• Receive complaints or identify concerns related to provider performance• May sign Professional Statements of Need for Housing Support as county designee• Identify service gaps

Agency Unit	Housing Support-Related Responsibilities
Contract Managers/Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute all Housing Support Agreements each fiscal year • Update vendor profile forms when new sites are added • Submit requests for new vendor numbers and work with the Department to request overrides in MAXIS for supplemental service authorization
County or Tribal Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consultation on provider performance and Housing Support Agreement compliance concerns • Guide responsible program areas on scope for provider performance management
Home and Community Based Services Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer expertise and guidance related to waiver services • Often develop relationships with provider front-line staff and directors • Help to identify service gaps or issues • Assist with vetting of prospective Housing Support providers intending to serve people receiving waivers
Adult Behavioral Health Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer expertise and guidance related to behavioral health services • Often develop relationships with provider front-line staff and directors • Help to identify service gaps or issues • Assist with vetting of prospective Housing Support providers intending to serve people receiving behavioral health services
Adult Protection Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify unit responsible for provider performance when an adult protection report was received, and/or screened-out, involving a Housing Support program
Unit or Staff Members Responsible for Provider Management, Performance, and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not be present within an Agency • Develop quality control program and oversees compliance process • Process and review complaints, adverse events, or identified concerns • On-board, train, and monitor providers • Develop and communicate consistent messaging across providers, including procedural or legislative changes • Coordinate across Agency units on issues related to Housing Support • Facilitate conversations regarding Housing Support with community partners and external stakeholders
Agency Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance for development of Housing Support resources • Consult on concerns or problems related to provider performance • Communicate investment from the top-down through involvement in Housing Support decision-making and oversight processes

Some Agencies may choose to contract with a third party to handle the administrative tasks related to Housing Support Agreements. In these instances, Agencies should be aware that quality assurance and oversight of Housing Support providers remains the responsibility of the Agency, not the third party contractor.

If an Agency is looking for ways to start exploring its Housing Support program as it exists now and envisioning what it could be, some recommended discussion questions are included in [Appendix A](#).

Considerations for Tribally-Run Programs

As sovereign nations, tribes directly enter into Housing Support Agreements with providers of their choosing, similar to counties. Most tribes do not have access to state systems needed for billing purposes, so they must partner with the Department to manage vendors. Tribes may need to coordinate with counties to ensure swift processing of Combined Application Forms so that people can receive authorization for Housing Support. The Department offers technical assistance to tribes to develop and support Housing Support administration.

If the Housing Support program is located on tribal land, the program is subject to tribal authority in relation to its licensing requirements – not those of the Minnesota Department of Health.

Leveraging Community Partners to Improve Housing Support Administration

Just as Housing Support engages all areas of an Agency, it impacts many different aspects of the community. Developing and leveraging partnerships with community stakeholders is critical to Housing Support administration and management. Such partnerships are key to improving Housing Support service delivery and recipient experiences, streamlining interagency communication or crisis response, identifying service gaps or needs, and ensuring provider compliance with applicable regulatory oversight agencies. Examples of community partners include:

- Minnesota Department of Health
- Regional Ombudsman(s)
- Continuums of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems
- Homeless Service and Advocacy Organizations
- Local Law Enforcement and Corrections Officials (police, fire, sheriff)
- City or Municipal Human Rights Officers
- City or Municipal Life Safety Departments (rental code, building code and occupancy requirements)
- City or Municipal Planning Departments
- Culturally-specific service or advocacy organizations
- Landlord Associations
- Legal Aid Services
- Behavioral Health Service Providers (i.e., crisis support or residential treatment providers, etc.)

If an Agency is unsure how community partners engage with people receiving Housing Support or providers, it is strongly recommended that Agencies initiate conversation with those partners. Reach out to meet with a partner individually or request time on a community group's agenda to learn about their observations or experiences with Housing Support and to develop mutually beneficial ways to work together.

Other ideas include:

- Establishing Housing Support advisory committees to guide the Agency's administration and management of the benefit, involving people with lived experience in the process.

- Holding quarterly or bi-annual meetings with local law enforcement, life safety officials, and building inspectors to focus on physical safety of Housing Support recipients.
- Coordinating with the Minnesota Department of Health to clarify jurisdictional issues (does not apply to tribes).
- Including Housing Support as an agenda item at Continuum of Care meetings.
- Reaching out to local landlord associations to explain the program, answer questions, and connect landlords to supportive housing providers.
- Brainstorming ways providers can come together to create innovative programs using Housing Support as part of the solution.
- Coordinating between government agencies to ensure Combined Application Forms are processed in a timely fashion.
- Identifying ways to improve communication across agencies
 - **Example:** if local law enforcement is getting numerous calls to a Housing Support provider's building or facility, how can they notify the Agency this is happening? How does the Agency engage the provider to offer support, and how is this relayed back to local law enforcement?

Strategic Planning and Expanding Housing Support Programs to Meet Community Need

Agencies should undergo strategic planning in order to maximize Housing Support resources and address community need. While individual eligibility requirements are fixed, an Agency has flexibility when determining when to extend a Housing Support Agreement. The following table includes assessment and planning considerations:

Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment

<u>Community Level</u>	<u>Provider Level</u>	<u>Agency Level</u>
How many people with disabilities are homeless? How many are long-term homeless?	Do existing providers have enough capacity to grow their programs without loss of service quality?	Does the Agency have a prioritized plan and timeline about how they want Housing Support to expand? How can the agency plan to use Housing Support to advance equity?
How many people are on the Coordinated Entry list that could use Housing Support immediately to move into housing?	How can existing Housing Support providers partner with other community resources to create programs supporting a specific population's needs?	Does the Agency have a uniform process for recruiting and onboarding new providers?
Who is currently benefiting from Housing Support? Who is being missed and could benefit from Housing Support?	Does the existing pool of providers have the expertise to meet the community's needs?	Does the Agency have administrative capacity to manage Housing Support should it expand? Do expansion efforts need to be tempered by availability of Agency resources?
What disparities are present in the Agency's Housing Support program?	Do existing providers meet Agency quality monitoring expectations?	What additional resources does the Agency need to expand and maximize the use of Housing Support?
Are there concerns about the larger Housing Support system? What are people with lived experience saying about their Housing Support experience?		Does the Agency have banked supplemental service rate beds that can be allocated to specific projects?
What types of Housing Support settings are needed? For instance, does the community need more supportive housing and fewer assisted living facilities?		How will the agency creatively combine different benefits with Housing Support to support a person's choice of housing and services as well as address community needs?

Banked Supplemental Service Rate Bed Management

Some counties maintain banked supplemental service rate beds ("banked beds"). After the legislature instituted a moratorium on supplemental service rate beds, the Department worked with counties to determine the number of supplemental service rate beds the county currently had in operation. Once the number of supplemental service rate beds was established, the county had the total number added to its "bank." Over time, as programs opened or closed, the county's banked bed list adjusted accordingly.

Due to the moratorium, there are three ways a Housing Support provider may be authorized to provide supplemental services:

- Receive an allocation of banked beds from the county
- Provide Long-Term Homeless Supportive Housing
- Obtain legislative authorization for a specific project

Counties should strategically manage their banked bed list to meet community needs and its housing-related priorities. Important considerations for managing banked beds include:

- Banked beds are a county-managed resource. Providers are not guaranteed banked beds, even if they operated with banked beds for many years.
- The county must update the Department on the status of its banked beds at least annually, as the Department maintains a global list of banked bed usage by county.
- Counties may request a utilization review of a Housing Support provider's banked beds at any time.
- At any time, though ideally during the Housing Support Agreement renewal, counties may recapture banked beds from a Housing Support provider with written notification and reallocate them to other Housing Support programs or projects.
- If a Housing Support provider's program started using banked beds, but later receives legislative authorization, the banked beds are returned to the county's bank.
- If a Housing Support provider's program closes permanently, the banked beds are added back to the county's bank. This does not apply to Long-Term Homeless Supportive Housing projects.
- If a Housing Support provider seeks to sell the program, the banked beds are added back to the county's bank. Banked beds cannot be "sold" with the Housing Support setting. The new owner must not only seek a Housing Support Agreement from the county, but also request a new banked bed allocation. This does not apply to Long-Term Homeless Supportive Housing projects.
- A county or tribe may request a transfer of banked beds from another county. The Department can help county planners get in touch with another county's banked bed list manager to discuss the request.

To obtain a list of counties with banked bed lists, contact dhs.dhs.grh@state.mn.us.

Recruiting, Onboarding, and Supporting Providers

Recruiting and Onboarding New Providers

Agencies have the authority to issue Housing Support Agreements to providers in their jurisdiction to best meet the needs of the community. Once an Agency determines its plan for expanding or enhancing its Housing Support activities to meet community need, it is important this is communicated through a recruitment strategy. The breadth of an Agency's recruitment strategy may be limited by resources available to execute it. The Agency needs to determine who is responsible for overseeing the recruitment strategy and ensuring it aligns with the Agency's vision for its Housing Support program. Some ideas include:

- Developing a dedicated Housing Support external website where community members can learn more about the program
- Obtaining leads from existing Housing Support providers
- Publicizing Housing Support-related successes
- Presenting at regional conferences
- Partnering with cities seeking [Low-Income Housing Tax Credit funding](#) through Minnesota Housing
- Hosting informational sessions for interested providers and inviting current providers to join and share their experiences
- Reaching out to existing housing providers to share information about Housing Support and how it could complement their existing programming

If an Agency's recruitment strategy is successful and a potential provider decides to start a Housing Support program, the Agency should have a transparent process through which a potential provider can request a Housing Support Agreement. An Agency's expectations for Housing Support providers should be clearly identified and understood by potential providers prior to application; the application process is the first step in an Agency's overall quality assurance method (see [Quality Assurance and Monitoring Considerations](#)).

Once a provider successfully completes the Agency's application process, the next step includes onboarding the provider to the Agency's Housing Support program. Some Agencies may wish to schedule an orientation meeting with different people the provider will need to know, such as contract managers, compliance specialists, Coordinated Entry Priority List Managers, and assigned financial workers. Many new providers require significant technical assistance navigating this portion of the process. As such, Agencies should identify who is responsible for overseeing this process. Before a provider can start accepting referrals, the following onboarding tasks need to occur (based on Group or Community-Based Agreement):

- Contact [Minnesota Health Care Programs](#) – organizations need to enroll as a Housing Support provider in order to bill the supplemental service rate and secure an Agency ID number for background study purposes.
- Submit background studies for all required staff and volunteers (note: it can take several weeks to complete this process).
- Secure insurance or worker's compensation coverage as required by the Agency.
- Locate housing (if site-based) and obtain appropriate city, municipality, state, or tribal licensure(s) or registration(s).
- Complete online Housing Support Orientation and Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporter Trainings.
- Develop lease or list of residency restrictions that may result in eviction.
- Obtain vendor number from the Agency (required for billing and provider management purposes).
- Review Agency billing process for Housing Support room/board.
- Complete a [Minnesota Health Care Programs MN-ITS Billing Lab](#) (for Housing Support supplemental service rate providers only).
- Long-Term Homeless Supportive Housing only:

- Obtain Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) site license through the Institute of Community Alliances and complete a Provider Request Form (note: it can take several weeks to complete this process).
- Contact Coordinated Entry Priority List Manager to understand how to obtain referrals.
- Execute appropriate Housing Support Agreement with the Agency.
- Complete any additional Agency contractual paperwork, such as compliance agreements.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to verify that these steps occurred before issuing a final Housing Support Agreement and authorizing the provider to accept referrals. If an Agency chooses to verify components of the above tasks before issuing a Housing Support Agreement, document that this happened. Additionally, Agencies should update any internal databases tracking providers, number of Housing Support beds authorized, and adjust the banked bed list as necessary.

Ongoing Provider Support

As Agencies think about developing or expanding Housing Support provider networks, Agencies must consider how they will understand and address the needs of the provider community. As noted previously, the scope of provider support activities vary based on an Agency's resources. If an Agency has limited capacity to support providers, caution should be exercised when expanding Housing Support. Many different methods of provider support include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining open, transparent lines of communication with providers
- Establishing regularly scheduled provider meetings to discuss updates, issues, ideas, and offer support
- Scheduling training opportunities that are free or low-cost
- Conducting site visits to build relationship and rapport with providers and receive real-time feedback from people served
- Creating clear expectations or guidelines for provider performance
- Providing technical assistance related to program requirements
- Offering constructive feedback where appropriate
- Actively listening and brainstorming ways to address their concerns
- Acknowledging that providing Housing Support services can be challenging and expressing gratitude for services provided

Quality Assurance and Monitoring Considerations

The Department authorizes Agencies to develop quality control programs or other monitoring programs to review provider performance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring the detection, prevention, investigation, and resolution of fraudulent activities or behaviors by applicants, recipients, vendors, or other participants in the Housing Support program
- Requiring and examining supporting documentation
- Conducting site visits to the Housing Support setting named in the Vendor Profile to ensure quality and compliance.

The Department recognizes that Agency capacity to develop and manage quality control or monitoring programs varies. While some Agencies may have committed resources or [grant funding](#) to do so, most Agencies do not. Given this reality, an Agency should consider how it plans to oversee its Housing Support provider network and address any quality assurance issues that may arise.

If an Agency could only dedicate resources to one quality control task, the most efficient and effective way to do so is through its new provider application process. Agencies have full discretion over when to offer a Housing Support Agreement to a potential provider. Ideas for bolstering this process includes:

- Developing a proposal process to thoroughly vet potential providers, integrating Department and Agency requirements and expectations into it (i.e., annual training requirements, etc.)
- Including partners, such as advisory groups and Agency leadership, in review of proposals
- Conducting an initial walkthrough of the identified Housing Support setting prior to referrals
- Verifying all components of the Housing Support Agreement are satisfied before issuing final approval to accept referrals, including background study completion.

Additional methods to manage quality assurance and monitoring include:

<u>Person</u>	<u>Provider</u>	<u>Place</u>
Create and communicate clear ways for a recipient to report provider concerns or complaints	Develop Housing Support provider manuals which detail Department and Agency policy and procedure (and include compliance signature page)	Conduct site visits on a regular basis
Talk with people getting services when conducting site visits	Establish annual training requirements in different content areas, such as supportive housing best practices, cultural responsiveness, and data privacy	Require submission of all required city, municipal, state, or tribal licenses and registrations at initial Housing Support Agreement application and at each renewal
Coordinate person-served forums to elicit feedback	Conduct file audits or reviews	Communicate with license and registration holders to resolve questions or concerns

Community Living Infrastructure Grant

In 2017, the Minnesota legislature passed a comprehensive housing package, adding language to the Minnesota Housing Support Act (Chapter §256I) to increase and improve opportunities for older adults and Minnesotans with disabling conditions or disabilities to live in the community. The housing package included grant funding

aimed at developing and supporting community living infrastructure throughout the state. Funded grant activities include:

- Outreach
- Building capacity to provide technical assistance and consultation on housing and related support service resources for persons with both disabilities and low incomes, e.g. Housing Resource Specialists
- Administration and monitoring activities related to the Housing Support program

Grants are issued in two-year cycles through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process. Agencies wishing to expand their Housing Support administration capacity are encouraged to apply. The Department issues a notification via the Grants and RFPs email list when the Community Living Infrastructure grant opens. Agencies may view open grants, RFPs, and requests for information (RFI), as well as sign up for the Department's Grants and RFPs e-mail list, [online](#).

Creative uses of Housing Support and Complementary Benefits

Housing Support can be used creatively in concert with other public benefits and across a variety of settings. Here, an example is offered under each benefit showing how different benefits can work together to support a person exiting a residential treatment setting.

Benefit	Explanation and Example	Example
Housing Support – Transition from Residential Treatment	Effective 7/1/2020, there is a new temporary basis of eligibility for people exiting residential treatment into a Housing Support settings. The state authorizes up to three months of full benefit with the goal of reducing periods of homelessness after residential treatment. During the third month, the Housing Support provider assists the person to transition to the next desired setting or apply for ongoing Housing Support.	Terry exits residential substance use disorder treatment into a board and lodge due to not having a place to return after discharge. Because Terry used the transitional pathway, Terry entered the board and lodge without any individual obligation toward the Housing Support benefit, even though Terry has a little bit of earned income. If Terry continues to need and want Supportive Housing after the transitional period of eligibility, the Housing Support provider assists Terry to apply for ongoing Housing Support.
Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) – Housing Assistance	Effective 7/1/2020, the MSA Housing Assistance benefit rate doubled, and benefit eligibility criteria expanded. MSA Housing Assistance is available to people who receive, or are eligible for, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and whose housing expenses are at least 40% of their income. People must receive Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) to obtain MSA Housing Assistance. People transitioning from any Housing Support program meeting eligibility criteria are able to apply. The monthly MSA and MSA Housing Assistance benefit increases SSI recipients' income by about 60%.	Terry enters a board and lodge after residential treatment using the pathway described above. Before the three months of transitional eligibility ends, Terry is approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). After getting SSI, Terry no longer wants to receive Housing Support since the individual obligation increases substantially, and they feel ready for independent housing. Terry knows that the board and lodge is the safest setting from which to search for an apartment, so Terry applies for ongoing Housing Support until an apartment can be located. Terry plans to apply for MSA and MSA Housing Assistance to increase their income and pay an apartment.
Housing Stabilization Services	Launched 7/20/2020, Housing Stabilization Services is a state plan Medicaid benefit designed to help older adults and people with disabling conditions identify housing goals, find housing, move into housing, and maintain stability. A person must be on Medical Assistance, have a disabling condition, experience housing instability, and have an assessed need for services. Housing Stabilization Services is	Terry has the goal of leaving the board and lodge using MSA and MSA Housing Assistance to support their goal for independent living. The board and lodge does not offer supplemental services, so the Housing Support provider suggests Terry find a Housing Stabilization Services provider to support their transition. After

Benefit	Explanation and Example	Example
	comprised of three services: housing consultation, housing transition, and housing sustaining. People eligible for Housing Stabilization Services receive 150 hours per transition and 150 hours of sustaining services annually.	<p>confirming Terry is on Medical Assistance, Terry contacts their licensed psychologist (qualified professional) to complete the Professional Statement of Need –the primary assessment pathway onto the services.</p> <p>After the assessment, the Housing Support provider helps Terry find an enrolled housing consultant in the area to complete a Housing Focused-Person Centered Plan. Terry meets with the housing consultant and completes the plan. The consultant helps Terry make an informed choice of housing transition/sustaining provider. After the Department approves Terry’s eligibility for Housing Stabilization, Terry and housing transition provider make a plan to help Terry find an apartment and move out of the board and lodge. Terry uses SSI, MSA, and MSA Housing Assistance to pay for an apartment, and they receive housing sustaining services after moving in to support ongoing housing stability.</p>

Guidance for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Projects

The [Low-Income Housing Tax Credit \(HTC\) Program](#) is a financing program administered through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for qualified residential properties. The program offers investors a 10-year reduction in tax liability in exchange for capital to build eligible affordable housing units in new construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition with rehabilitation. Through this process, applicants can seek 4% or 9% in tax credits, and must set aside a minimum number of units to meet income and rent restrictions. Applicants can also designate units for people with disabilities and people meeting Minnesota Housing’s definition of high priority homeless.

Typically, the request for proposals publishes in April of each year and the application is due in June. Prior to the request for proposal’s publishing, housing developers and application teams begin planning. Housing developers and application teams need the support of the city, county or tribe, and the local Continuum of Care in order to submit a complete application package for consideration.

Frequently, housing developers and application teams factor Housing Support into the underwriting process. In order to include Housing Support in an application, a Letter of Housing Support Commitment is required from the Agency. Agencies should be at the table early in the process with city officials and Continuum of Care representatives to ensure planning is complete, coordination occurs across entities, and deadlines are satisfied.

Additional considerations include:

- Making sure community partners are aware of the Agency's role and responsibility – and to include the Agency early in the planning process as well as refer housing developers and application teams to the Agency if Housing Support is desired
- Determining if projects are required to complete the Agency's proposal process before getting a letter of support and reviewing all timelines to ensure this requirement is feasible
- Identifying who completes the Letter of Housing Support Commitment and where this is maintained within the Agency
- Providing technical assistance to housing developers and application teams to ensure it is understood that if Long-Term Homeless Supportive Housing is planned, that any eligible person in a designated unit needs to meet both the definition of long-term homeless and high priority homeless.

Homeless Definition Comparison

<u>Department of Human Services</u>	<u>Minnesota Housing Finance Agency</u>
Long-term Homeless	High Priority Homeless
Persons including individuals, unaccompanied youth, or families with children who lack a permanent place to live continuously for a year <u>or</u> more or at least four times in the past three years	Households (individuals, families with children or youth) prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) through the Coordinated Entry System

Additional Resources

The Department is committed to helping Agencies understand, administer, and manage Housing Support so that older adults or people with disabling conditions and low-incomes can achieve housing stability. To that end, the following resources are available for continued learning:

- [CountyLink Housing Support Resource Page](#)
- [Bulletin 20-48-05: 2020 Legislative Changes Impacting Housing and Support Services](#)
- [Housing Benefits 101](#)
- [Housing Stabilization Services](#)

Questions or Technical Assistance Requests

- Please direct all questions or requests for technical assistance to dhs.dhs.grh@state.mn.us

Appendix A: Questions for Agency Exploration of Current and Needed Housing Support Resources

- How many people receive Housing Support within the Agency's jurisdiction? Who is being served, and is anyone left out? What does the data say about equity and access to Housing Support?
- How many Housing Support Agreements are active? Who are the provider agencies?
- What is the Agency's process for executing Housing Support Agreements?
- Is there a new provider vetting process or a current provider performance review process?
- What is the reputation of Housing Support providers among Agency staff, people served, and community partners?
- Who is primarily responsible within the Agency to manage Housing Support, and what has their experience been? What are the needs and gaps identified by this person/unit?
- Does the Agency maintain a banked bed list? If so, who maintains it, and where is it stored?
- What is the Agency's plan for improving management of its existing Housing Support resources?
- How many people experience housing instability and homelessness within the Agency's jurisdiction? How can Housing Support be leveraged to support people who are homeless?
- Where are service gaps for people who are older or low-income and have disabilities? How can Housing Support help to meet the need?
- What is the Agency's vision to expand Housing Support? What types of resources would be needed to fulfill that vision?
- What is the experience of people receiving Housing Support? How will the Agency go about getting people's input into the development of Housing Support resources?
- How do people receiving Housing Support report complaints or concerns to the Agency holding a Housing Support Agreement with a provider?
- If the Agency receives a complaint from a person receiving Housing Support, who processes it?
- What is the experience of Housing Support providers? How will the Agency go about getting provider input into how to best support providers and the services offered?
- If a tribal agency, what type of support is needed from regional counties to process paperwork if the tribe does not have access to Department systems? Similarly, if a county agency, what type of support and partnership is needed to support tribal Housing Support activities?
- Are supportive housing best practices (Housing First, harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and person-centeredness) integrated into Agency requirements?
- What are small action steps we can take in the meantime to improve Agency processes regarding Housing Support if additional resources are not allocated or available to expand? How will we monitor those action steps and know we are moving in the right direction?