

Creating a Housing Stabilization Plan

WHO?	Who is involved in developing the Housing Stabilization Plan?	A Housing Stabilization Plan is created with the case manager and the client. The client has the primary role in establishing their housing goals. If the client is involved with multiple services (i.e. mental health services, child welfare, etc) it may be a good idea to ask the client if their other case managers can be involved in the discussion to ensure that each provider is aligned with the client's goals. The role of the case manager is to support the follow through and achievement of the goals defined in the plan.
WHAT?	What is a Housing Stabilization Plan?	Housing Stabilization Plans document all the steps both the client and the case manager(s) will take to support the client in moving towards permanent housing. The plan addresses the steps needed to build on the client's resources and addresses their barriers. There are clear benchmarks and timelines so that when the plan is developed, everyone knows what happens next, when things need to be done and who is responsible for each action step. It is meant to be flexible and can adjust to account for changes in the client's circumstances.
WHERE?	Where are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	Housing Stabilization Plans are developed with the client when they are residing in any form of housing. The plan can follow the client as they transition to other programs and does not need to be recreated if the client enrolls in a different program. The focus of a Housing Stabilization Plan should change as the client's circumstances change – attaining housing versus keeping housing.
WHEN?	When are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	Immediately! It takes some time to complete the steps in an action plan. The sooner the work begins the better. And since the Housing Stabilization Plan defines the pathway to housing or to keep the current housing, the client should capitalize on each day to work towards the long term goal of attaining or keeping permanent housing.
WHY?	Why are Housing Stabilization Plans important?	Housing plans create a clear road map for both the client and the case manager. By establishing goals from the very beginning, clients are immediately engaged and motivated. Breaking down the goal of housing into concrete and attainable steps provides opportunities to celebrate success and helps clients feel their goals are manageable. Everyone (the client and case manager) knows who is working on what and why. It is not meant to be punitive. If a client is struggling in completing tasks the plan should be modified to adjust for the challenges they are facing.
HOW?	How are Housing Stabilization Plans created?	<p>Housing Stabilization Plans are developed with the client and after their assessment is completed. They reflect the client's voice and expressed goals. They include long term and short term goals. They have timelines and note who is responsible for completing each action item. Again, they can be updated or changed as needed.</p> <p>A strong Housing Stabilization Plan supports and works with the information learned in the assessment.</p>

What should a housing assessment include?

Housing History:

1. Tell me about the last place you lived that worked well for you. What about that experience/housing/situation made it work well for you?
2. Have you been on a lease before? How did that end? Can you get a positive landlord reference? Have you had any past evictions?
3. Have you ever lived in public housing or Section 8 before? How did that end? Do you owe any money to a housing authority?
4. Do you know if you have any housing-related debt (past due rent, utilities, etc?) If yes, about how much?

Housing Goals:

1. Where would you like to live next? Is there a neighborhood you have in mind? Is there an area where you want to avoid (due to domestic violence or recover needs)?
2. Where do you have any friends or family? Where is your childcare set up? Your children's schools? Job options? Transportation?
3. What kind of apartment are you looking for? Do you need any special accommodations? What size unit?
4. What monthly rent are you trying to target? How much do you think you can afford each month?

Housing Challenges

1. Have you tried applying for a new lease recently? What was the outcome? What did they tell you about your application?
2. Do you have any concerns about moving back into your own place? What are they?

Other potential questions:

- What are some things relevant to your housing that you can't live without?
- What are some things relevant to your housing that you are willing to forego right now?
- How far are you willing/able to travel to/from home and work?
- Are there any areas of the city you want to avoid?
- How comfortable are you looking for an apartment? What kinds of questions will you ask? Do you want someone/me to come with you when you start looking?
- How can I help you with your goals?

What a Housing Assessment Addresses

- ❖ Both strengths and challenges to get into housing
- ❖ Past housing experiences (both positive and negative)
 - Explores what works and doesn't work for the client
- ❖ Focuses on true housing barriers to understand what type of housing may be needed (families with high housing barriers should begin looking for private landlords with more flexible criteria). Housing barriers include:
 - Lack of income
 - Criminal backgrounds
 - Insufficient savings for move-in costs
 - Lack of a valid form of personal identification
 - Housing debt (to include debt to private landlords, housing authorities or utilities)

- ❖ The client's credit report (using free resources as often as possible)
 - This makes sure there are no unexpected housing-related debts or evictions
 - Clients can begin creating a re-payment plan with the necessary creditors (with advocacy from their case manager)
- ❖ Existing housing resources, to include:
 - Communities or neighborhoods where support systems exist (children's schools, childcare, mental health supports, etc.)
 - Communities or neighborhoods where potential employment opportunities that relate to the client's strengths exist
 - Identifying past landlords, employers or other person who can offer a positive reference

What a Housing Stabilization Plan addresses

- ❖ Two to three housing goals (as described by the client)
 - Can include public housing (but should be targeted for clients with the greatest barriers to increasing income). Working with public housing authority and sdhousingsearch.com for subsidized housing.
 - Should include market housing in areas that work for the client and are near existing resources and communities of support; resemble past housing situations that were successful for the client; and are based on real or realistically projected budgets. Creating a real or estimated budget with a client is a powerful tool to begin the discussion of what rent a client can afford and/or what income the client should target to afford their rent. This knowledge can help both in looking for housing and employment
- ❖ Long-term and short-term goals with clear timelines that move the client closer to the housing outcome they defined for themselves
 - A long-term goal towards renting an apartment may be "getting either a full-time job or two part-time jobs that will afford rent"
 - Short-term goals towards that long-term goal may be "creating a resume with my case manager, searching newspaper ads every day, working with Department of Labor, accessing resources for move-in costs", etc.
- ❖ Even before the client transitions into permanent housing, developing a Housing Stabilization Plan to address long-term housing stability
 - Creating a housing "safety plan" that reflects realistic challenges the client can face in the future and details of what resources the client can access if needed
 - Reviewing tenant rights and responsibilities in a way the client understands
 - Helping the client to identify and connect with any resources needed to address other goals that will support long term housing stability (mental health services, financial literacy courses, food banks, etc.).

Housing Stabilization Plan

Name: _____

Date of Plan: _____

Address: _____

Next Review Date: _____

Barriers: What barriers are keeping you from attaining or maintaining permanent housing?

Goals: What goals would you like to set to help alleviate the barriers listed above:

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

Action Steps: What steps need to be taken to help achieve the goals above:

For Goal 1

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

For Goal 2

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

For Goal 3

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

For Goal 4

What:	Purpose:	Who Needs to Complete:	Complete by:

The above barriers, goals and action steps were developed in partnership with my case manager. I understand that each barrier, goal and action step listed above will support my efforts in securing permanent housing. I agree to work on these goals in partnership with my case manager. I will update my case manager as I complete the above goals and will communicate any challenges I experience and understand my case manager can offer me support as needed. Failure to work toward achievement of these goals could result in termination from the program.

Client Signature

Date

Case Manager Signature

Date