



# **Chester County Partnership To End Homelessness**

## **Crisis Response System Residency Guidelines (Out of County Policy)**

### **May 2, 2022**

#### **Context**

All Counties throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania are required to have a housing crisis response system with a single point of entry to include centralized intake and coordinated assessment services. The goal of this Coordinated Entry System is to assist individuals and families who are HUD definition homeless and/or at-risk for homelessness find emergency shelter and achieve permanent housing stability more effectively given limited funding and available resources. In 2013, government, philanthropic and community leaders from Bucks, Chester and Montgomery Counties came together to establish and adopt in good faith a common standard for serving out of county residents. It is the expectation that other neighboring Counties will adopt these joint guidelines as a step towards streamlining services and support for residents experiencing a housing crisis. Chester County has remained a Housing First community and continues to remove barriers to effectively serve the most vulnerable residents of our County.

#### **Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness Response System Residency Guidelines**

People seeking homeless assistance typically have better and more viable support systems in their County of origin. Discerning residency in the homeless population can be a challenge. The following guidelines have been drafted to inform decision making when verifying residency in the homeless population.

- **To be considered for housing and/or homeless assistance services in Chester County (including Case Conferencing), the individual or families last permanent address must be in Chester County. The call to 2-1-1 must also be from within Chester County.** If someone calls from outside of the County, they will be immediately referred to the coordinated assessment provider in that region.
  - Exceptions to this policy would include Chester County residents that are currently in a hospital or other treatment setting outside of Chester County.
- If an individual or family calls 2-1-1 from Chester County but discloses during the intake process that their last permanent address was outside of Chester County, the 2-1-1 Call Specialist will directly refer them back to their home County's Coordinated Entry System.
  - If the Chester County Street Outreach Team determines that an individual or household is not from Chester County diversion back to their home County will be conducted. This can include but is not limited to providing financial assistance transportation.
- Individuals and families whose last residence was outside of Chester County will **not** be referred for Emergency Shelter or offered Case Conferencing except under the following circumstances:

- **The individual or family reports that they are fleeing domestic violence (Category 4 of HUD’s Definition of Homelessness – see attached).** These cases will be immediately referred to the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County (DVCCC) during the initial 2-1-1 call. If it is determined that the individual or family is fleeing domestic violence but there are no emergency shelter units available through DVCCC, they may be considered for emergency housing resources. The Chester County Street Outreach Team will require a signed DVCCC “Consent to Release Personal Information” to verify that the caller contacted DVCCC and that no other resources are available at that time.
  
- **The individual or family is literally street homeless and/or sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (Category 1 of HUD’s Definition of Homelessness) and it is determined by the Chester County Street Outreach Team that they are currently in Chester County through no fault of their own.**
  - Examples of this scenario could be a veteran that was discharged from the VA Medical Center and cannot return home or an individual or family was that was discharged from an institutional setting in Chester County and cannot return to their home County. Note that this information must be confirmed by Chester County Street Outreach Team. Even in these cases, every effort will be made to assist the individual or family to return to their original place of origin through robust diversion efforts. If after all reasonable efforts to divert the individual or family have been made but they can still not return home, they may offer Emergency Shelter and/or Case Conferencing. **These situations will be determined on case-by-case basis by the Chester County Street Outreach Team.**
  
- **The individual or family comes to Chester County to take refuge from a natural disaster as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), cannot return to their place of origin due to safety issues and has no other available resources to assist them in securing temporary or permanent housing (or those resources have been exhausted).** Note that documentation confirming the individual or family’s status must be provided to the Street Outreach Team in order to be considered under this exception.
  
- **The above-mentioned examples are the only exceptions to the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness Response System Residency Guidelines.** All other individuals or families that are not from Chester County will be referred to the Coordinated Entry program from their place of origin. **A client simply getting Medicaid benefits in Chester County or the fact that they are working with an organization in Chester County will not supersede the policies above.** Outlier or special circumstances not accounted for in the policy should be brought to the attention of the Chester County Department of Community Development.

Please contact the Chester County Department of Community Development at 610-344-6900 or by e-mail at [ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org) if you have any questions.