NY-508 CoC Written Standards for YHDP Joint TH-RRH for Youth and Young Adults in Erie and Niagara County

Goals of Written Standards for TH-RRH

These written standards document the NY-508 Continuum of Care (CoC) and community standards and expectations of the YHDP funded Joint Transitional to Rapid Rehousing program. The Transitional projects may also be subject to additional oversight from the Office of Child and Family Services.

Our goals include:
● Establishing community-wide expectations pertaining to the operating and continuous quality improvement of NY-508 CoC and YHDP funded joint TH-RRH programs
● Creating consistency and a clear pathway to collaboration
● Ensuring transparency of priorities and performance metric to recipients and subrecipients

Guiding Principles

All YHDP projects will ensure our YHDP Guiding Principles are implemented at all levels of the program including service delivery. See our [Coordinated Community Plan](#) (pg. 47).

GUIDING PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Trauma Informed Care	Projects will integrate knowledge about trauma and its effects into policies, procedures, practices, and physical spaces
Positive Youth Development	Positive Youth Development is a strengths-based framework in which staff collaborate with youth to develop protective factors that encourage social and emotional development
Family Engagement	Focusing on incorporating and engaging the family unit as a whole will help prevent and shorten episodes of homelessness for youth
Immediate Access to Housing with no Preconditions	TH-RRH projects will not create barriers or conditions to assistance
Youth Choice	Youth expressed they wish to have autonomy over their lives and the ability to make their own decisions, with the guidance of trustworthy mentors
Individualized and Client Driven Supports	Projects will individualize case management plans to each youth's unique needs and goals
Social and Community Integration	Youth need to feel they belong in their community and have opportunity for social engagement.
Progressive Engagement	Projects will focus on immediate resolution of a youth or young adult's housing crisis and then tailor subsequent assistance to their unique needs and strengths.
Coordinated Entry	We support a no wrong door and youth-centric approach to CE. All projects will participate in CE.

Supporting all Youth and Young Adults

Youth and young adults (YYA) of color as well as YYA identifying as LGBTQ+ make up a disproportionate number of people experiencing homelessness in our community and nationally. Our projects are designed with intentional strategies to ensure responsiveness to the needs of all populations, including thoughtful approaches to staffing, case management, and ongoing performance improvement.

Non-Discrimination Policy

To ensure fair access and services to all members of the community, clients cannot be screened out due to perceived barriers including, but not limited to, sexual orientation, disability, criminal history, and substance use. Refer to [HUD's Equal Access Final Rule.](#)

Description of Projects

The Joint Transitional and Rapid Rehousing project is designed to provide YYA swift access to crisis housing (TH) and a pathway from that crisis housing to rapid rehousing (RRH). YYA may choose to use either the TH portion or the RRH portion, or move from the TH portion into the RRH portion at their discretion.

Project Eligibility and Prioritization

- Projects must follow [CoC Written Standards](#)
- Projects must follow the [CoC's Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures](#)

Target Populations

Erie County TH-RRH	Niagara County TH-RRH
Compass House CoC: Scattered site TH and RRH, males or females 18-24 YHDP: 2 single site TH ages 16-24, single males and females, scattered site RRH ages 18-24	Community Missions YHDP: 1 single site TH (includes Resource Hub), scattered site RRH - males or females, pregnant/parenting youth ages 18-24

The Transitional portion of the project acts as temporary / crisis housing for YYA. YYA age 18 and over may choose to reside in Transitional housing or Rapid rehousing when units are available. There is not a requirement for YYA to enter the TH portion before being able to utilize RRH, however **YYA residing in TH will be prioritized first for RRH units**.

Rapid Rehousing is designed to help clients to be quickly and permanently housed in their own apartment in the community. YYA residing in the TH portion of the project are automatically eligible for RRH if they choose, as all clients are enrolled in TH-RRH jointly when they enter the project. *YYA ages 18-24 may be referred to the RRH portion if they are either in TH and choose to move to RRH, or are prioritized from the by-name list based on their TAY-VI-SPDAT score and length of homeless history.* See [CoC Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedure](#) (pg. 24-25).

*The maximum length of stay in TH-RRH is 24 months in the TH portion and 24 months in the RRH portion. Alternative requirements may apply (see "Extending length of time in RRH to 36 months" on p. 7).

Prioritization for TH-RRH

The Coordinated Entry Lead will run the CE HMIS report, prioritize clients, and maintain the by-name list. This list will prioritize individuals based on the priority and ranking described below and then the CE Lead will refer clients accordingly. Consistent communication between the CE Leads and TH-RRH projects will ensure YYA are sheltered and housed as quickly as possible.

Priority Ranking

*For RRH - first priority are YYA already residing in the TH project.
*For TH and YYA under the age of 18 - first priority are those in crisis for whom family reunification is unsuccessful and max out their time in emergency shelter with no alternatives.

1) Category 1 or 4. Experiencing homelessness for 6+ months within a 12 month period and a VI score 4+
      Ranked by:
- 1) Length of homeless history
- 2) VI Score
  - Tiebreaker:
    - 1) Household with children and/or pregnant
    - 2) Unsheltered

2) Category 1 or 4. Experiencing homelessness for 3-6 months within a 12 month period and a VI score 4+
      Ranked by:
- 1) Length of homeless history
- 2) VI Score
  - Tiebreaker:
    - 1) Household with children and/or pregnant
    - 2) Unsheltered

3) Category 1 and 4. Experiencing homelessness for less than 3 months within a 12 month period and a VI score between 4+
      Ranked by:
- 1) VI Score
- 2) Length of homeless history
  - Tiebreaker:
    - 1) Household with children and/or pregnant
    - 2) Unsheltered

4) Category 2 - At imminent risk of losing stable housing within 14 days
- Category 2 YYA are prioritized if there are no Category 1 or 4 youth on the by-name list in need of TH/RRH and the Category 2 YYA cannot be diverted utilizing the Prevention/Diversion Screening Tool.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATION: Those about to lose Section 8, or who requested an emergency transfer plan (DV) will be determined on a case by case basis.

Guidelines for Financial Assistance

Progressive Engagement

TH-RRH programs will utilize a Progressive Engagement approach to financial assistance and services. Using this approach, the client initially receives only the amount of assistance that is needed to quickly resolve their housing and most pressing needs. After the most basic needs are resolved, the case manager will review whether the client has successfully resolved their housing crisis or is in need of increased support. The case manager can increase / decrease the intensity of the assistance until the client has obtained permanent and stable housing. These guidelines and benchmarks reflect agreed upon best practices in the community. Rather than being strict rules for program participants, the benchmarks outlined here represent goals for each client. *Each case management plan will be individualized and client driven.*

Benchmark Goals:

- Staff will be trained on the Progressive Engagement framework.
- Staff will review the client's financial situation at least <u>every three months</u> to determine if intensity of services should be modified.
- Amount of rental assistance decreases over time until the client pays 100 percent of the rent several months before graduating from the rental assistance portion.

Percentage of Rent Paid by Program	Months of Assistance
95 - 100%	0 - 3
70 - 75%	4 - 6
50%	7 - 9
20 - 30%	10 - 12
0%	13 - 15

Guidelines for Termination and Grievance Procedure

At a minimum:
- Projects should have a written termination and grievance procedure, including a process by which participants can provide feedback.
- Clients should acknowledge they've received a copy of the program's rules and termination/grievance procedures before receiving assistance.
- Clients should only be considered for termination for severe and/or repeated violations.

Cause for Mediation and Possible Termination (including but not limited to):

TH:
- Persistently making others feel unsafe with harassment or violence.
- Persistent substance use or substance selling/manufacturing causing an unsafe situation for oneself or others.
- Persistent violation of house norms resulting in an unsafe situation for others.

RRH:
- For project based leasing: Persistent violation of contract between the program and the client and refusal to participate in a corrective action plan.
- Persistent violation of lease between client and landlord and refusal to participate in a corrective action plan / landlord-client mediation.
- Destruction of property.

Red Flag and Termination Oversight Committee

The Termination Oversight Committee is made up of TH-RRH staff, HAWNY staff, and YAB members. The purpose of this committee is to offer solutions and investigate client terminations / grievances and provide recommendations. This committee does not have access to personally identifiable information on YYA who are current or former clients of the TH-RRH programs nor does this committee make a final decision on whether or not to terminate a client (the individual program will have the final decision).

Suggestion for Mediation and Conflict Resolution Procedure:
- **1st Step:** Verbal and written warning that client will be terminated if they continue to violate program rules and a description of corrective steps to take. Client and Case Manager will collaborate on a corrective action plan.
- **2nd Step:** Mediation meeting with case manager and supervisor and discussed in the youth by-name meeting.
- **3rd Step** (if necessary): Red flag / Termination Oversight Committee discussion. Solutions and suggestions will be provided and a final warning given to the client.
- **4th Step:** Termination from program. Client receives verbal and written confirmation of their termination. Referred to other support services as eligibility allows.

Client Temporary Stay in Institution or Jail

Clients in the TH portion for YYA aged 18-24 may retain their spot for 30 days (this may be less than 30 days depending on individual circumstances). Clients in the RRH portion may remain active and keep their spot for up to 90 days while they reside in an institution or are incarcerated. Separate guidelines may apply for TH clients in certified OCFS programs.

Transfer to Higher Level of Care

If it is determined in the by-name committee case conference that the client is in need of a higher level of care and wishes to be transferred to a PSH project, a transfer request may be made and submitted to the Transfer committee (See [CoC CE Policy and Procedure](#), pg. 46). In this case, the PSH project will need to document the client is eligible for their program. The Transfer committee needs at least 30 days to review the transfer request. **Not all transfer requests will be approved. Currently clients may not be transferred directly from one RRH program to another RRH program.**

Special Alternative Requirements for YHDP Projects

HUD approved the following alternative requirements for our community's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program funded TH-RRH projects. Documentation of justification for use of the alternative requirement is required for each client (See Appendix A). Documentation must be kept within the programs files for HUD auditing purposes.

Conduct habitability inspection instead of HQS

Recipients of this alternative requirement may use [habitability standards](#) in 24 CFR 576.403(c) rather than Housing Quality Standards in 24 CFR 578.75 for short or medium term (up to 24 months) housing assistance. Recipients implementing this special YHDP activity must keep documentation of which standards are applied to the units and proof that the units complied with the standards before assistance is provided for every unit funded by the approved YHDP funded project.

CoC Guidance: Utilizing habitability inspections rather than an HQS inspection allows our projects flexibility to utilize more housing options and move YYA swiftly into RRH. Cases will be reviewed individually and reviewed by the youth by-name committee and program supervisor.
Justification: YYA may be prioritized for this waiver if it would be in their best interest to live in a particular area (close to current employment, school, or transportation) or the YYA is in need of an emergency transfer and it is not possible to swiftly move them into housing without a habitability inspection.

Extending length of time in RRH to 36 months

Rental assistance can be provided up to 36 months to a household for the RRH portion of the TH-RRH. The recipient may provide up to 36 months of rapid rehousing rental assistance to a program participant if the recipient demonstrates (1) the method it will use to determine which youth need rental assistance

beyond 24 months and (2) the services and resources that will be offered to ensure youth are able to sustain their housing at the end of the 36 months of assistance. The total amount of time a participant can receive rental assistance in the approved project can not exceed 36 months.

CoC Guidance: YYA may reside in the RRH portion for up to 36 months, rather than the usual 24 months. This allows more time for the YYA to become stabilized and is helpful if they are completing higher education or apprenticeship training leading to employment. Cases will be reviewed individually and reviewed by the youth by-name committee and program supervisor.

Justification: YYA may be prioritized for this waiver if they enroll in and maintain good standing in higher education or job training/vocational training that will exceed two years. YYA experiencing severe mental or physical health conditions may also need to utilize this waiver if PSH is not an option and individual circumstances are assessed.

Sponsor Based, Leasing, Project Based Rental Assistance

The recipient may use leasing, sponsor-based rental assistance, or project-based rental assistance for the approved project.

CoC Guidance: The TH-RRH project has the option of leasing an RRH unit themselves so the client is subletting from the project. This allows for YYA with limited credit history or negative rental history more choice and opportunity in choosing an apartment. Rental requests, landlord/client or project/client agreement form may be uploaded to HMIS and stored securely at the program offices. Cases will be reviewed individually and reviewed by the youth by-name committee and program supervisor.

Justification: YYA may be prioritized for this waiver if poor/limited credit or employment history / criminal justice history results in repeated landlord refusal to grant them a lease.

Utilizing a Lease in RRH for less than 12 months

The recipient may allow for a lease in RRH for less than 12 months.

CoC Guidance: Clients may enter into a lease agreement in RRH for more than one month but less than 12 months. Cases will be reviewed individually and reviewed by the youth by-name committee and program supervisor.

Justification: Youth may be prioritized for this waiver if poor/limited credit or employment/criminal justice history results in repeated landlord refusal to grant them a 12 month lease or it is in the best interest of the youth to reside near the school or job they are attending and the housing stock available does not provide a 12 month lease.

Guidelines for Service Provision and Case Management

Supportive services must be offered to YYAs for the duration of their stay in TH-RRH and may be offered up to 6 months after the client leaves the TH-RRH program. It is not required for YYA to participate in services, however case management staff must make contact with the YYA at least once per month.

Once a referral is made to TH-RRH, the assigned case manager will attempt to make contact with the YYA for up to 30 days before closing out the referral and moving to the next client on the priority list.

Goal Setting: Clients entering the TH-RRH program are assigned standard goals for housing, education, employment, and income. Youth may also choose goals of their own to work toward. Goals will be reviewed at month 3, 6, 9, and 12. Case managers will use a goal setting curriculum to guide service delivery and use the LifeWorks Self-Sufficiency Matrix (at entry, 6 months, and exit) to document client progress.

Case Management Schedule: Case managers in TH and RRH must meet with clients at least 1 time per month after the client is housed or while the client resides in TH. The case manager and the youth can determine which meeting schedule and method of communication works best. Modes of communication may include face to face meetings, text messaging, video calls, email, or phone calls.

Performance Standards and Continuous Quality Improvement

Our Coordinated Community Plan details desired outcomes and performance measures for our YHDP funded projects. The YHDP Lead Team, Youth Action Board, and Homeless Alliance of WNY will oversee Continuous Quality Improvement efforts for YHDP funded projects and review performance on a quarterly basis. Continuous Quality Improvement will include both quantitative and qualitative feedback. Exit interviews and post-exit surveys will also be utilized to collect client feedback on implementation of the guiding principles.

The TH-RRH specific outcomes are as follows (see CCP p. 77-79, 84)
Increase successful access to crisis housing (TH)
Increase YYA housing stability
For RRH, decrease the length of time youth spend literally homeless
Reduce recidivism
Support youth in education, life skill development, employment, income, health, and well-being
85% of participants remain or exit to stable housing
35% of youth age 18 - 24 are employed
Maintain stable housing at 3, 6, and 12 months after rental assistance ends
Enrollment in school / vocational program
Improve social-emotional well being an independent living skills

YHDP System Level Outcomes for all projects (see CCP p. 82-83)
Staff retention
Increase % of case managers trained in all guiding principles according to the CCP
# of youth who access safe crisis housing
# of youth on by-name list
Increase # of youth served by Family Engagement Team
Increase # of youth assessed through Coordinated Entry
Length of services provided
% of youth who exit to permanent housing
% recidivism
% of first time homeless youth
Increase % of youth reporting services were delivered in a culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate manner (guiding principles in action)
Decrease # with Juvenile Justice Involvement
% of youth with improved social-emotional outcome
% of youth who achieved their education / employment goals

Appendix A - Alternative Requirement Justification

For Auditing Purposes - NY - 508 CoC - Round Three YHDP

Client Name: _____ HMIS ID: _____

Case Manager: _____ YHDP Project Type:_____

Alternative Requirement Used:

❏ **Conduct habitability inspection instead of HQS**
❏ **Extending length of time in RRH to 36 months**
❏ **Sponsor Based, Leasing, Project Based Rental Assistance**
❏ **Utilizing a Lease in RRH for less than 12 months**

Justification for utilizing this alternative requirement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Case Manager Signature: Supervisor Signature:

_____   _____

Date:_____   Date:_____

Proposed Addition - Not yet approved
7/8/21

Financial Assistance and Determining Eligible Costs

Eligibility for financial / rental assistance will be reviewed at least every 3 months to determine if adjustments are necessary. **Refer to CoC Interim Rule at 24 CFR 578 Subpart D "Program Components and Eligible Costs" for a detailed description of eligible costs.** In order to receive rental assistance, the program participant <u>must enter into a lease agreement that is for no less than one year.</u> The unit must meet HUD's <u>rent reasonableness standards and must pass the HQS inspection.</u> (Waivers may be used for some participants - see section on Alternative Requirements).

Examples of eligible costs for the RRH portion of the program (see 24 CFR 578 Subpart D "Program Components and Eligible Costs" for a detailed description of all eligible / non eligible costs) :
- Short term tenant based rental assistance (up to 3 months)
- Medium term tenant based rental assistance (3 to 24 months)
- Security Deposits (not to exceed 2 months rent)
- First and last month's rent
- Property damage costs (not to exceed the cost of one month's rent)
- Rental application fees
- Moving costs (truck rental or hiring a moving company)
- Utility deposits (one time fee paid to utility company)
- The costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of case management services, outreach services, health and mental health services, legal services, etc. (see **24 CFR 578 Subpart D "Program Components and Eligible Costs"** section 578.53)
- Child care (establishing, operating, or child care vouchers for children under the age of 13, if children are disabled, they must not be over 18 years old)
- Transportation for service provider to deliver services or purchase of vehicle to transport participants
- Transportation for participant to use public transportation to receive any services
- Cell phone for service provider to contact clients
- Food (meals or groceries if necessary and client has no other way to obtain food)

*Check the fair market rent annually and refer to your agency's specific rent reasonableness policy.
*Refer to HUD's Housing Quality Standards for a unit inspection checklist to be completed prior to move in and annually thereafter.

Enrollment

Enrollment Process:

1. TH-RRH staff may receive a referral directly from the Coordinated Entry Lead. The client must not be enrolled in any other RRH programs and must come from the by-name list.
2. TH-RRH staff will begin outreach to the referred client as soon as possible in order to complete an intake into the TH-RRH project in HMIS.
3. Upon contact with the client, TH-RRH staff will complete an intake or make an appointment with the client to complete an intake.
4. TH-RRH staff will conduct HMIS protocol upon contact/intake into TH-RRH program:
   - Complete ROI for the TH-RRH project.
   - Complete entry (including YHDP/RHY/Austin questions).
5. TH-RRH staff will begin providing case management and housing search for the client.

Update / Move In Date:

1. When the client moves into their housing, use the interim update to document their move in date, and update the "current living situation" box to say "housed".
2. Update the Lifeworks Self-Sufficiency Matrix in the measurements tab every 90 days and at exit.

Program Exit. Non-Engagement, and Transfer

Positive Exits: Positive exit destinations include being housed permanently with family/friends, stably housed independently or in shared housing, or returning to foster care and stably housed.

MIA Status: If a case manager makes **three documented attempts within 90 days** to reach a client enrolled in the TH-RRH program and are unsuccessful, the client may be disenrolled from the program and will be notified by official communication / letter.

- **Referral via CE and MIA status:**
  - Upon referral of a client to the TH-RRH program by the Coordinated Entry Lead, the TH-RRH program will attempt to make contact with the client as soon as possible in order to conduct an intake and enter the client in the TH-RRH program in HMIS. If the TH-RRH program is unable to make contact with the client after 30 days have passed, and an intake has not been completed, the referral expires and the referred client no longer has a referral. If the client returns and is no longer MIA after their referral has expired, that client will be placed back onto the by-name list.

Length of assistance:

Supportive services may be provided for up to 6 months after the YYA is stably housed or after rental assistance ends.

Appendix B - HMIS Detailed Workflow

First section - applicable to Drop In Centers and Falls Street Station

Second Section - applicable to TH-RRH clients upon enrollment, update, and exit.

<u>**Section 1:**</u>

PRE-REFERRAL / FIRST ENGAGEMENT / CE ACCESS - applicable to Compass House Resource Center or Falls Street Station:

1. **Enter the client into your YHDP screening project so that the client may access Coordinated Entry - Before Enrolling the Client in your Main Project**
    - Use the Enter Data As (EDA) mode to *enter data as* your agency's screening project.
    - *Don't forget to use the correct EDA!*

    - Search for a client file in HMIS. If one does not exist, create a new file. <u>If the client has an existing file, use that file.</u>
    - Go to the client's entry/exit tab and add an entry/exit for the screening project.
        - *NOTE: Use the Backdate mode if you are not entering data in real time.*
   - Use the project type "HUD"
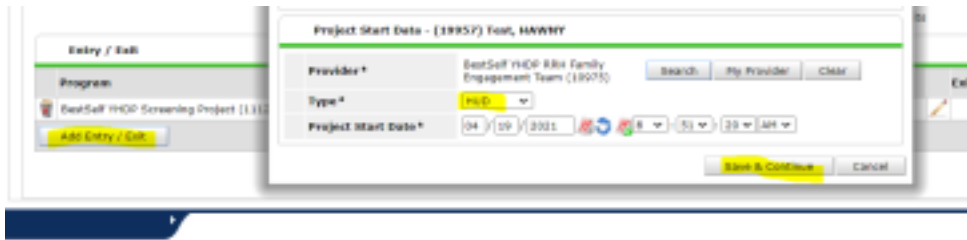
2. **Complete the Diversion Assessment.**
   ● This tool is found in Appendix A. This tool is meant to help the case manager engage in a conversation with the client, in a Motivational Interviewing style, about the client's permanent connections and assist the client to reach out to trusted individuals with which the client can reside. The goal of this conversation is to divert clients from needing to utilize emergency shelter or experience literal homelessness.

3. **Determine next step for client enrollment or Coordinated Entry access**
   ● If you were able to successfully divert the client from shelter or literal homelessness, then record that result in the Coordinated Entry Event question as shown at exit. **The client may be a good candidate for the FET if they are still believed to be at-risk.**
   ● **IF CLIENT IS LITERALLY HOMELESS AND CAN NOT BE DIVERTED:** Leave the client open in the screening project and complete the TAY-VI-SPDAT. **Refer to crisis housing, 211, DSS, or other appropriate emergency services.**
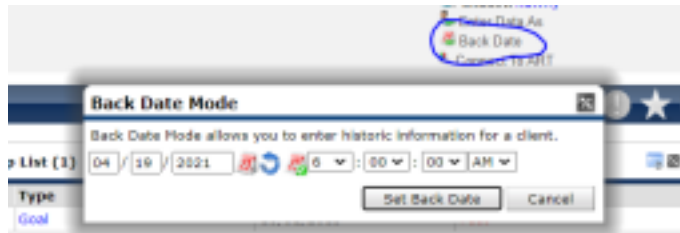   ● **Record the outcome in the CE event:**
     ○
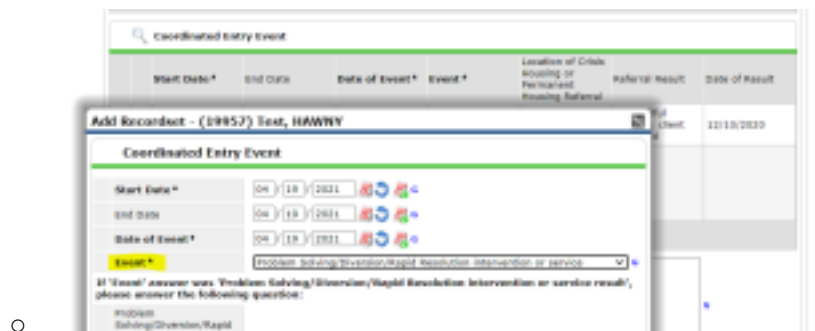
Section 2:

CLIENT HAS BEEN REFERRED TO YOUR PROGRAM FROM BY-NAME LIST:

1. <u>Day 1</u> - **Open the client in your YHDP main project.**
   - ■ *Don't forget to use the backdate and EDA mode as needed*

2. **Complete intake assessment.**
   - ● **YHDP/RHY** Intake (Complete at Start Date with client, update as needed in interim update, and complete at exit). Austin questions may be completed at Start Date in the Entry tab as well. If not, complete the Interim Review as explained below.

3. <u>**Within 45 days (after building rapport)**</u> **- Complete supplementary data and make updates as needed in the Interim Review:**
   - ● **Here in the Interim Review, complete the Austin Assessment within 45 days of enrollment:**
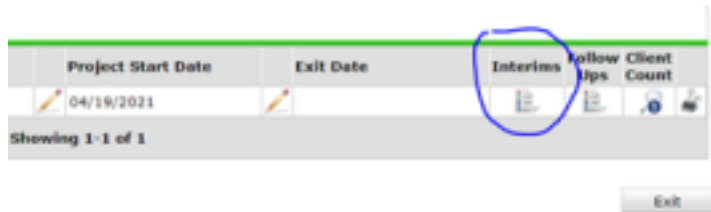
   - ☐ **Complete the Austin Assessment within 45 days of the start date if you were not able to complete at start date.** This can be completed without the client present and will be completed a total of **2 times, when the client starts the program and at exit**.

   - ● **Here in the Measurements tab, Complete the Lifeworks Self Sufficiency Matrix:**

   - ☐**Complete the Lifeworks at start and every 90 days during the course of the service plan. Complete a final time at Exit.** Choose Initial, Update, or Final. This can be completed without the client present.

4. **Make updates as needed:**
   - For example:
     - Update Lifeworks at least every 90 days
     - When housing is located and the client moves in, enter their "move in date"
     - Use casenotes and service transactions to add information as you gather it

5. **When client completes project and/or at exit:**

   Because they've completed the program and/or maxed out their time

   OR

   Because they've been MIA for 90 days
   - When the client is no longer receiving services from your project:
     - Update the Lifeworks a final time in the measurements tab
     - Add an exit date in the entry/exit tab by clicking the pencil before the blank exit date space for your project and select the appropriate destination.
       - Update any YHDP/RHY questions and the Austin Assessment at this time in the exit tab.