



## Policy for letters of support

In order to receive a letter of support for a permanent housing project the Continuum of Care will follow these guidelines:

1. Projects and programs should have a direct, positive impact upon the delivery of homeless services within the CoC service area from active members of the CoC that have demonstrated full participation in the CoC meetings and planning process, as well as those that utilize the CoC Coordinated Entry system and follow a Housing First policy.
2. Members of the CoC that are proposing projects other than homeless projects may not receive a letter of support.
3. All requests for letters of support should be sent to the Executive Director no later than 21 days before the grant application is due. HAWNY cannot guarantee letters of support if not requested within the 21 day period.
4. A template support letter should be provided to the Executive Director. The letter should include a summary of the proposed project, targeted population, and for housing project, location, number of beds/units, and how you will be taking clients from the CoC's Coordinated Homeless System. For NYS Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) applicants, a MOU must be signed between the Homeless Alliance and the ESSHI applicant. A template MOU is included in this policy. The applicant must agree that a minimum of 30% of the ESSHI beds will be dedicated to people who meet the HUD literally homeless definition. This means these beds can only be used for people who are either at a shelter or living in places not for habitation. Referrals for these dedicated beds must come from CoC Coordinated Entry. The applicant shall include the following information in the MOU: proposed location, number of total beds/units, number of ESSHI beds, number of dedicated ESSHI beds for literally homeless clients, share eligibility, vacancy, point of contact with coordinated entry lead staff, including ESSHI and affordable units, when they become available.
5. Once adequate notice is given, the Executive Director reserves the right to meet with the applicant before approval or denial of the letter of support.

## Conditions where a letter may not be given

1. If the Agency has lost funding through the CoC or ESG programs for poor performance.
2. If it is a start-up non-profit with no history of performance or financial records.
3. If the project is for a population with which the CoC has no experience.

4. Previous projects that do not accept referrals from Coordinated Entry (CE). Information should be provided # of referrals received from CoC CE and # of clients accepted in the program.

## Template MOU

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NY-508 Continuum of Care and **[INSERT NAME OF ESSHI FUNDED PROVIDER AGENCY]**

### I. BACKGROUND

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), a funding source for Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) grants, has requested that grant recipients obtain a letter of support from the local CoC in which they agree to establish collaboration and coordination between ESSHI recipients and the local CoC and Coordinated Entry System (CES).

This is to ensure that ESSHI funding recipients are working with the local CoC to meet the needs of the homeless population in the area that they are serving, in close collaboration with CES, which seeks to engage those homeless the longest, most vulnerable, and least likely to exit homelessness on their own.

### II. PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Summary of the proposed project (should include target population, implementation timeline, the role of the applicant (developer or service provider), location, # of total proposed affordable units, # of ESSHI units)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **units** will be dedicated to literally homeless clients and referral must come from CoC coordinated Entry at initial lease up and remain dedicated the duration of the ESSHI contract.

### III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING PROVIDERS

**[INSERT LOCAL ESSHI PROVIDER NAME]** will:

1. Establish clearly written policies and procedures with program eligibility requirements that are shared with CES;
2. Provide all eligibility documents and application forms to CES. CES will provide all documents that confirm client eligibility to ESSHI programs. If ESSHI programs have additional documents not required for eligibility that they choose to collect for clients, those forms will be collected by the ESSHI program. This includes, for example, documents necessary to calculate a lease or agency-specific forms.
3. Establish program points of contacts that will report vacancies and accept referrals/process intakes and notify the CE Manager if there are any staffing changes at a later point to the established CES program points of contact;
4. Operate using a Housing First model (strongly encouraged);

5. Report all vacancies/program availability to the CE Manager with as much advanced notice as possible to allow CES to review clients for eligible candidates for referral;
6. Once vacancies are reported, CES will coordinate directly with the provider to identify and refer eligible households that are willing to accept the available housing opportunity. CES will have five business days from the time a bed/unit becomes available to identify an eligible household and process a referral.
7. All CES referrals should be accepted for review of eligibility/consideration of program acceptance and an ESSHI permanent housing program will have five business days to confirm the acceptance or denial of CES referrals. ESSHI programs should submit reason(s) for denial in writing to CES, as CES will need to inform a client as to why they were denied a housing opportunity. CES may send up to three eligible client referrals for any one vacancy in an effort to ensure a quick transition into permanent housing. If there are no eligible CES clients to fill a current vacant bed/unit, ESSHI providers are encouraged to review other non-CES referrals. For any vacancy in a program that is OMH-funded, SPOA will process a direct referral if CES does not have a presenting client to refer.
8. Agencies can and are encouraged to manage their own waitlists, and in the event that CES does not have a presenting CES client that is eligible and willing to accept an available housing opportunity, the agency can then offer housing opportunities to those from their waitlist.
9. Share application information and point of contact information for the other affordable units within the project with CES.
10. encourage to accept homeless clients into the non-ESSHI affordable units.

#### TERMS OF AGREEMENT

This MOU shall be effective upon adoption by each signatory agency and entity. This MOU will be reviewed and updated once the project is built and start accepting referrals to incorporate changes and clarifications of roles and responsibilities.

**[INSERT PROVIDER NAME]**

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Signature of Program CEO/Executive Director

Print Name:

Title:

Date:

NY-508 Continuum of Care

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Signature of CoC Lead Agency-Homeless Alliance of WNY

Print Name: Kexin Ma

Title: Executive Director

Date: