

Regional Program Standards

Focus: WorkSource Centers Youth Program Services
 Other: Economic Opportunity Program

Topic: Rent Assistance HUB

Date: March 1, 2023

New Revised

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Overview

The Rent Assistance program supports participants in the Economic Opportunity Program (EOP), Community Construction Training Program (CCTP) and NextGen Youth Program based on eligibility and funding availability. The program is administered by designated housing HUB providers in Multnomah County, and serves participants enrolled in eligible career coaching program. The Rent Assistance program is intended to provide Rapid Re-Housing and Homelessness Prevention housing services for participants to secure or stabilize their rental housing and allow them to actively engage in workforce development services.

Rapid Re-Housing services are designed to rapidly connect households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing provides short-term rental assistance with Career Coaching. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency and stay housed. Rapid Re-Housing serves individuals that are homeless or fleeing domestic violence.

Homelessness Prevention services are designed to help prevent households who are at risk of becoming homeless from becoming homeless. Homelessness Prevention provides short-term rental assistance with Career Coaching. The goals are to help people retain their housing to prevent them from becoming homeless. Homelessness Prevention serves individuals that currently have housing or live in an apartment, but who are facing eviction or who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

There are two staff functions within the Rent Assistance program:

- The **Rent Assistance Coordinator** is staff at the HUB agency and is responsible for completing rent assistance eligibility, assisting participants with their housing search, administering rent assistance funding, completing and maintaining the rent assistance paperwork and file documentation and entering payment and outcome data in the I-Trac Rent Assistance record. Funders may also require data entry into Service Point.
- The **Career Coach** is staff at the eligible career coaching service provider and is responsible for referring participants to the Rent Assistance Coordinator at their assigned HUB, creating the Rent Assistance I-Trac record, providing the Rent Assistance Coordinator with the participant's Career Plan and Prosperity Planner Budget, copying or entering allowable services in the I-Trac Rent Assistance record for documenting program engagement and communicating with the Rent Assistance Coordinator.

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Eligibility Requirements by Funding Source

Funding sources that support the Rent Assistance program include:

- A Home for Everyone (AHFE)
- Home Forward Short-Term Rent Assistance (STRA)
- Prosperity 10,000 (P10K)

HUB contractors will make funding decisions and follow the eligibility requirements of the funding source that is being utilized for the participant as outlined below.

Note: Keys to Progress rent assistance services are to follow Keys to Progress Regional Program Standards.

A Home for Everyone

To receive rent assistance services using A Home for Everyone (AHFE) funding, a participant must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined below:

- Be eligible for and enrolled in the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, including completion of WIOA Documentation.
- Be eligible for and enrolled in an EOP AHFE, Portland or DCJ program, and meet the Engaged Participant definition below.
- Meet the AHFE Homeless definition.
- Have a total household income for the 6 months prior to eligibility determination of 50% of the Median Family Income for Multnomah County for the participant's household size. Priority is to be given to households at 30% Median Family Income or below.
- Identified as a Multnomah County resident when registering for and enrolling in the eligible Career Coaching program. Rent assistance may be available for participants who find housing outside of Multnomah County; funder approval is required in this situation. To secure approval, the HUB must email their Worksystems contract liaison and detail the circumstances. Worksystems will request funder written approval and provide it back to the HUB for file documentation.

When the HUB determines that AHFE is the best funding source for a participant's rent assistance, and the participant is not enrolled in an AHFE EOP program, the HUB is required to verify that the participant is eligible for AHFE funding. The HUB is to complete and save the Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services form (documenting income and homeless status) and verify the remaining AHFE eligibility requirements through I-Trac participant file data.

AHFE Homeless Definition

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including any of the following situations:

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- Living in a place not meant for human habitation (such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or campground).
- Living in a shelter, transitional housing or hotel or motel paid for with a voucher.
- Exiting an institution (such as a hospital or jail) where they resided for less than 90 days and prior to entering the institution resided in a place not meant for human habitation or an emergency shelter.
- Losing their primary nighttime residence within 14 days with no subsequent residence identified and lacking the resources and support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.
- Youth or families who meet other federal definitions of homelessness.
- Fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous conditions and has no other residence or resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- Imminently at risk of losing access to, or is unsafely sharing, the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, including but not limited to person's presence is in violation of a lease/rental agreement, housing has been deemed uninhabitable by a government or social service agency, there exists an imminent threat of violence and/or illegal activity, the individual's or family's presence violates maximum housing occupancy limits.

Home Forward STRA Funding

To receive Home Forward STRA funded Rent Assistance services, a participant must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined below:

- Be eligible for and enrolled in the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, including completion of WIOA Documentation.
- Be eligible for and enrolled in an eligible EOP, CCTP or NextGen Career Coaching program, and meet the Engaged Participant definition below.
- Identified as a Multnomah County resident when registering for and enrolling in the eligible Career Coaching program.
- Meet the Home Forward STRA homeless definition.

Home Forward STRA Homeless Definition

When the Our Just Future HUB is using their agency's Home Forward STRA rent assistance funding to pay for an eligible participant's rent assistance, Our Just Future will determine homeless eligibility requirements based on Home Forward's definition of homeless.

Prosperity 10, 000 Funding

To receive P10K funded Rent Assistance services, a participant must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined below:

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- Be eligible for and enrolled in the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, including completion of WIOA Documentation.
- Be eligible for and enrolled in the P10K program.
- Be eligible for and enrolled in an EOP, CCTP or NextGen Career Coaching program, and meet the Engaged Participant definition below.
- Be 16 years of age or older.

Engaged Participant

To be referred to and approved to receive rent assistance, participants must be engaged with their Career Coach by meeting one of the following engagement criteria:

- The participant is actively working with their Career Coach and engaged in training, career planning, job search or other activities specified in their career plan. The participant must also attend established appointments and maintain scheduled contact with the Career Coach at least monthly.

OR

- The participant has completed the participating program's career plan activities and is employed and maintaining monthly contact with the Career Coach.

Career Coaches must verify program engagement in the Rent Assistance I-Trac record as noted in the Service Definitions section of these Regional Program Standards. Service engagement must be entered in each month the participant is searching for housing, and then each subsequent month that rent assistance is received until rent assistance ends. The monthly verification of services must occur prior to the rent payment being released.

Service Definitions

Career Coaching

Career Coaching is relationship-based guidance and coaching dedicated to increasing the self-sufficiency of participants through unsubsidized employment. It includes assessment of employment-related skills, identification of achievable career and training goals, and development of an achievable career plan. Career Coaches support participants in the execution of their Career and Resource Plan and attainment of their goals by building a relationship of support and accountability.

Data Entry: Where the participant is enrolled in an eligible Career Coaching program, the Career Coach must enter their program services in the qualifying program's I-Trac record and copy the service to the Rent Assistance record. Refer to the *Rent Assistance I-Trac Data Entry Guide* for additional information. Services cannot be open ended – all services must have a start and end date at the time of data entry.

Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid Re-Housing services quickly connect households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing. Rapid Re-Housing provides short-term rental assistance and career coaching services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency and remain housed. Rapid Re-Housing services are provided to individuals that are currently experiencing homelessness or fleeing domestic violence.

Data Entry: The Career Coach enrolls a participant in this service on the Registration tab in the Other Rent Assistance Information control – Housing Type at Registration. The HUB tracks assistance with Rapid Re-Housing services by entering the Rapid Rehousing (HUB) service in I-Trac on the Services tab. This service sets the Participation date but does not update the Rent Assistance Last Qualifying Fund service date. Services cannot be open-ended – all services must have a start and end date at the time of data entry. Refer to the *Rent Assistance I-Trac Data Entry Guide* for additional information.

Homeless Prevention

Homelessness Prevention services help prevent households at risk of becoming homeless from becoming homeless. Homelessness Prevention provides short-term rental assistance and career coaching services. The goals are to help people retain their housing to prevent them from becoming homeless. Homelessness Prevention services serve individuals that currently have housing or live in an apartment, but who are facing eviction or who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

Data Entry: The Career Coach enrolls a participant in this service on the Registration tab in the Other Rent Assistance Information control – Housing Type at Registration. The HUB tracks the Homeless Prevention service by entering the Homeless Prevention (HUB) service in I-Trac on the Services tab. This service sets the Participation date but does not update the Rent Assistance Last Qualifying Fund service date. Services cannot be open-ended – all services must have a start and end date at the time of data entry. Refer to the *Rent Assistance I-Trac Data Entry Guide* for additional information.

Allowable Rent Assistance Expenses

Administrative Requirements

Prerequisites

- **Current Career and Resource Plan** (updated within the last 3 months). The referring Career Coach must upload the participant's current Career and Resource Plan to the participant's I-Trac record utilizing the I-Trac Document Upload Tool, when submitting the rent assistance referral. Document Upload type is Individual Plan.
- **Current Prosperity Planner Budget** saved to I-Trac record. The referring Career Coach must ensure that the Prosperity Planner is completed by the participant prior to the rent assistance referral. Rent Assistance staff verify the completion of Prosperity Planner budget prior to accepting the rent assistance referral.
- **Monthly Engagement.** The Rent Assistance Coordinator must verify monthly engagement before authorizing a rent payment.

Documentation

All expenses are to be tracked in the participant's I-Trac Rent Assistance record on the Payments tab in the Rent Assistance Payments control. Documentation requirements are noted with each payment type below. When assistance is paid directly to the participant a signature that acknowledges receipt of the payment must be on file with the back-up payment documentation noted below in Rent Assistance Payment Definitions – direct deposit into an account in the participant's name and the endorsement on a cancelled check are allowable documentation of this requirement. Direct deposit information must be received directly from the participant with approval to deposit assistance payments to the account.

Fiscal Procedures

Each HUB must establish a written process to ensure proper fiscal procedures are followed, including paying from original invoices, securing original receipts and appropriate participant acknowledgment of direct payments made to reimburse participants.

Documentation of payments is maintained in the financial records attached to the payment record. A copy of the participant's Prosperity Planner budget documenting the participant's financial need must be saved in I-Trac.

Rent Assistance Payment Definitions

Housing Related Costs

Payments for services or items necessary to move into stable housing. Allowable costs include fees for and related to Rent Well classes, access to Community Warehouse, housing related legal fees, household items and U-Haul or similar truck or van rental to move furniture.

Whenever possible, community resources such as Goodwill and Community Warehouse should be utilized. Housing related costs should be coordinated with the Career Coach(es) to ensure there is not duplication of payments.

Required Documentation: Itemized receipt from the store, merchant or organization where the purchase or payment was made.

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Motel Vouchers

Payment for homeless participants to stay in a motel while they are searching for permanent housing.

Required Documentation: Itemized receipt from the motel where the purchase was made.

Move-In Fee

A fee that landlords charge related to moving into a unit. This often includes last month's rent, which a landlord requires to be paid up-front before an individual moves in.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Property Debt

Debt owed to a former landlord. Allowable only if the debt is the only barrier to landlord acceptance of a housing application and there is an approved unit that a current landlord is willing to rent.

WIOA funds may not be used for Property Debt.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Rent

Monthly rent payments may be provided for a maximum of 24 months. Rent payment may include utility costs in situations where landlords add utilities to rent total that will be covered under rent payments and follow below required documentation measures.

WIOA funds may not be used to pay interest charges or late fees associated with past-due rent expense.

Rent payments toward Section 8 or public housing units are limited to the costs not covered by the housing voucher.

Required Documentation: Copy of rental agreement. Payment must be made to the landlord/rental/property management company.

The following payment types may be available for participants receiving Homelessness Prevention services:

- One to three months' mobile home space rent. Additional months may be requested by Career Coach. The HUB has the authority to approve additional months.
- Assistance for owner-occupied mortgage payments may be available with funder approval. To seek approval, the HUB must email their Worksystems' contract liaison and detail the circumstances and the total dollar amount being requested. Worksystems will request funder approval and forward to HUB for file documentation.

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- Rent-to-own rent agreements are also only allowed with Worksystems/funder approval if rent payments are being applied to the principal balance.

Required Documentation: For mobile home space rent, a copy of the rental agreement is required. For mortgage or rent-to-own assistance, required documentation will be communicated with approval.

Rent Application Fee

Fees required by a landlord or property manager of all applicants related to applying for a housing unit.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Rent Arrears

The amount of accrued and unpaid obligations arising under a lease with a current landlord. WIOA funds may not be used to pay interest charges or late fees associated with past-due rent expense.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Rent Late Fees

Fees related to payment of rent after the date it is due. WIOA funds may not be used to pay interest charges or late fees associated with past-due rent expense.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Security Deposit

A predetermined amount of money that landlords require to be paid by all tenants at the beginning of tenancy. These funds can later be used to pay damages to a unit or back rent owed to the landlord. Payment amount limited to not more than two-times the rent amount.

Required Documentation: Payment from an itemized invoice directly to the landlord/rental/property management company.

Utilities

For participants receiving Rapid Re-Housing services, assistance with utilities is allowable only if it is a barrier for maintaining housing and the participant is unable to access community resources. WIOA funds may not be used to pay interest charges or late fees associated with past due utility expense. Types of assistance include:

- **Monthly Expense**
Monthly assistance with current utility costs.
- **Arrears**
Past-due amount owed to utility provider on an open account.
- **Debt**
Utility costs owed to a utility provider on a closed account.

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- **Deposit**
Payment to a utility provider needed to get an account open or restarted after shut-off.
- **Late Fees**
Fees related to payment of utility bills after the date they are due. Only allowable for participants receiving Homelessness Prevention services. Not allowable using WIOA funds.

Required Documentation: Clear verification (copy of detailed utility invoice that matches participants address in I-Trac) of charges due. Payment must be made to the utility/vendor.

Terminating Rent Assistance

If a participant fails to meet the program engagement requirement, the Career Coach must contact the HUB as soon as disengagement is determined.

The Career Coach enters a case note to document that the participant failed to meet program engagement requirements of monthly career coaching services and sends an email to the HUB explaining why the participant is no longer considered engaged and outline the barriers that the participant has faced towards engagement.

The Career Coach and the HUB are to discuss the participant's circumstances and what efforts have been made to re-engage them in services. The decision to terminate rent assistance and the related timeline is to be made by the two staff together.

The HUB must have a written rent assistance termination policy and follow it. When it has been determined that a participant's rent assistance will be terminated, the HUB will send the participant a 30-day notice of rent assistance termination. The policy must include a statement that rent assistance may be terminated if the participant does not meet monthly engagement requirements.

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Performance

The following performance will be tracked and reported.

Service	AHFE Outcome	Performance and Reporting Cohort	Data Entry
Housing Supports	Number of Participants provided with Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention services	Quarter of Participation Date	ServicePoint I-Trac
Housing Retention	Denominator Number of Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention enrolled Participants Numerator Number of Participants that retain housing for 6 months (disaggregated by Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention) after financial assistance ends.	Quarter of 6 months after Exit Date	ServicePoint I-Trac
	Denominator Number of Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention enrolled Participants Numerator Number of Participants that retain housing for 12 months (disaggregated by Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention) after financial assistance ends.	Quarter of 12 months after Exit Date	ServicePoint I-Trac

Service	Prosperity 10K Outcome	Performance and Reporting Cohort	Data Entry
Housing Supports	Number of Participants provided with Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention services	Quarter of Participation Date	I-Trac
Housing Retention	Denominator Number of Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention enrolled Participants Numerator Number of Participants that retain housing for 6 months (disaggregated by Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention) after financial assistance ends.	Quarter of 6 months after Exit Date	I-Trac
	Denominator Number of Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention enrolled Participants Numerator Number of Participants that retain housing for 12 months (disaggregated by Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention) after financial assistance ends.	Quarter of 12 months after Exit Date	I-Trac

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Performance Management Guidance

Enrolled Participant

A customer who has completed the Rent Assistance Eligibility and Registration process and a Participation Date has been set in I-Trac. The service of Rapid Re-Housing or Homelessness Prevention is the first service entered by the HUB contractor in the Rent Assistance record after the referral is accepted and sets the Participation Date. The Rent Assistance Coordinator cannot pay the rent until the participation date has been set.

Program Status

- **Exit:** Where a participant has ended Rent Assistance the Rent Assistance Coordinator must manually enter a HUB Final Rent Exit service on the I-Trac Services tab and a Program Status of Exit on the Outcomes tab. The Exit date is the date of the HUB Final Rent Exit service. Staff may remove an exit for up to 90 days. Beyond 90 days the participant must start a new Rent Assistance Enrollment.
- **Auto-Exit:** Will auto populate if a record goes more than 90 days without a service entered.
- **Pre-Program Exit:** Where a referral is initiated, and the customer is not accepted into the program. This service may be manually entered in I-Trac by the HUB contractor when a referral is not accepted, or the service is also automated by the system where the individual is not approved within 45 days of Application date (Referral).

Rent Assistance Outcomes

- **Type**
 - At Exit – Housing Status at the point of Exit.
 - 6 Month Retention (After Exit) – When a participant has retained their housing for a full 6 months after rent assistance ends.
 - 12 Month Retention (After Exit) – When a participant has retained their housing for a full 12 months after rent assistance ends.
- **Housing Status**
 - Housed
 - Not Housed
 - Unknown – When a participant is unable to be contacted.
 - Received RA Again – This status is entered when a participant has exited and returns after 90 days needing rent assistance again. In this case the participant is re-enrolled into a new Rent Assistance enrollment episode and this status is entered in the exited Rent Assistance record. When this status is entered the participant's first enrollment episode outcomes are removed from performance.

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Documentation Requirements

The following are file documentation requirements for participants receiving rent assistance funding under the referenced projects. Documentation may be paper located in a physical file (to be always kept in a secure [locked] file location); may be kept in a secure electronic file (secure means limited access/access requiring system permissions and is not in a folder accessible by all staff and with no security built in); or may be in the form of staff attestation through data entry in the I-Trac, ServicePoint or Agency MIS, as appropriate.

Data entry and Rent Assistance participant file maintenance is the responsibility of the HUB agency.

AHFE

Requirement	Detail	Location
Rent Assistance Program Application	Includes all required demographic and characteristic information, eligibility for program participation and a statement that all information contained on the Application is true and correct. The Program Application is to be signed and dated by the participant.	I-Trac Participant File
AHFE Funded Rent Assistance	When the referred participant is not enrolled in AHFE, and the HUB determines that AHFE funds may be used for the rent assistance, the HUB is required to verify the participant meets AHFE eligibility requirements. The HUB is required to complete the Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services form (documenting income and homeless status) and verify the remaining AHFE eligibility requirements through I-Trac participant data.	Participant File
Release of Information	Secure signatures of all adults in the household on the Release of Information printed out of ServicePoint (AHFE funds only) and the Rent Assistance Coordination Agency release, including Agency Grievance procedure and Client Confidentiality statement signed by both participant and HUB staff.	ServicePoint Participant File
Career Plan	Participant's current Career and Resource Plan (updated within the last 3 months).	I-Trac
Documentation of Financial Need	Completed and current Prosperity Planner budget.	I-Trac
Case Notes	Notes relative to participant's progress in their plan. Case notes are either a service or a narrative case note tracked in I-Trac or a service in I-Trac and narrative case note in an agency's case noting system. Narrative case notes should not include any medical or treatment information, or personal information that is not relevant to their career plan activities.	I-Trac Agency Narrative Case Note System

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Requirement	Detail	Location
Rent Assistance	The HUB will enter all required data in the Rent Assistance controls in I-Trac and any required data entry to ServicePoint, including detailed payment information such as ServicePoint ID, name of landlord, date of check, amount of rent paid and month for which rent was paid.	I-Trac Payments Tab ServicePoint
Rent Assistance Follow-Up	Evidence of follow-up contact at 6- and 12-months following the date that rent assistance ended; entered by the HUB in appropriate system(s).	I-Trac ServicePoint
30-day End of Assistance Letter	Copy of letter sent to landlord and Participant, along with any amendments (if applicable).	Participant File
Rental/Lease Agreement	Documentation is required to show that the Participant is living in the unit legally and with knowledge of the landlord/property owner.	Participant File

Prosperity 10,000

Requirement	Detail	Location
Rental/Lease Agreement	Documentation is required to show that the Participant is living in the unit legally and with knowledge of the landlord/property owner.	Participant File