

PA-510 Lancaster County “At-Risk” Procedures

Background and Purpose:

In order to sustainably end chronic homelessness, the Lancaster CoC has developed the following criteria and procedures to address those at risk of meeting the chronic homelessness definition.

Development of the criteria and procedures:

These criteria and procedures have been developed and refined over the last 18 months alongside efforts to prioritize individuals already experiencing chronic homelessness:

- **2010-July 2014:** Multiple versions of a by name list of vulnerable and chronic individuals were developed and tested during the 100,000 Homes Campaign. Through this process, HMIS data quality was improved. Additionally, the proposed change to the definition of chronic homelessness was out for public comment during this time. Anticipating the new definition, the community conducted research on the typical lengths of stays of vulnerable populations and decided on a threshold of 280 days homeless for people added to the by name list, based on [National Alliance to End Homelessness comments on the proposed definition](#).
- **Summer of 2014:** Lancaster CoC signed up for the Zero: 2016 initiative.
- **Fall of 2014:** LCCEH, utilizing local college interns, ran a report in HMIS to identify individuals with over 200 days experiencing homelessness and cross referenced with disability status to determine chronic status.
- **January 2015:** CoC conducts registry week alongside PIT Count and incorporates data into By Name List.
- **Winter/Spring 2015:** Community verifies list, cleans up data and creates BNL management tool using EXCEL spreadsheet. “At risk” tab¹ is added to track individuals at risk of meeting the chronic homeless definition. This tab includes people with lengths of homelessness over 200 days regardless of disability and people with lengths of time of 365 days, but no documented disability. For unsheltered, the community cleaned up the data by looking at case notes in HMIS. The community also established standards for outreach workers to keep clients open in HMIS and update the case notes with each contact with the client in order to help document individuals’

¹ BNL also includes: Active, Inactive, and Housed tabs.

continuous and cumulative lengths of homelessness. Individuals at risk are tracked and individual housing plans are created.

- **July 2015:** CoC implements new HMIS system that will allow for broader use among all social service organizations in the community and more flexible and robust reporting features.
- **Fall of 2015 – Winter 2016:** Community refines BNL, adds coordinated assessment date, date identified, and method to track offers of housing. Also manually looks at each individual on the list to update chronic status based on new definition.
- **May 2016:** 3 individuals on active chronic list, 7 individuals on at-risk list, all with housing plans.
- **May 2016 to Current:** CoC formalizes procedures and tests and refines strategies. Adds “Housed At-Risk” List to track individuals in PSH who are having housing issues and need landlord mediation, etc as well as individuals in RRH programs for over 365 days.

Continuous Improvement:

The Lancaster CoC will continue to use client and system level data related to the characteristics and needs of individuals at risk of chronic homelessness to inform system level interventions as well as individualized service and housing plans.

Criteria:

Individuals who meet at least one of the following criteria are added to the “at risk” tab of the community’s By Name List, managed by LCCEH:

- Individuals who have experienced homelessness for 365+ days but do not have a self-reported and/or suspected disability.
- People who have a documented disability and have 200+ days homeless.
- People who have 3 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.
- People identified by outreach workers and shelter staff as having extraordinary difficulty navigating the housing system.
- People living unsheltered who, due to personal reasons, are currently unable to accept housing offers.

Individuals who meet at least one of the following criteria are added to the “Housed At-risk” Tab:

- Individuals in PSH identified by case managers as having housing issues that may result in eviction.
- Individuals enrolled in RRH for over 365 days.

Procedures:

- 1) Weekly, LCCEH reviews a system-wide Annual Performance Report (APR) from HMIS to identify individuals who meet the criteria and add them to the “At Risk” and “Housed At-Risk” tabs of the BNL.
- 2) LCCEH verifies sheltered clients’ status and housing plan with program directors:
 - a. Phone contact to discuss individuals in their program 200+ days (TH & ES), 365+ days (RRH)
 - b. Follow up in person meeting at 300+ days (TH & ES), 450+ days for RRH.
- 3) Weekly By Name List review including all outreach workers, CHART (Coordinated Assessment team) staff, Emergency Shelter workers, and LCCEH staff at the Rescue Mission.²
- 4) Outreach workers and case management staff schedule doctor appointments and transportation assistance provided for any person that there is concern of a disability but no known documentation.
- 5) Special brainstorming interagency meetings convened as needed for any person having extraordinary difficulty navigating the housing system to develop the most comprehensive housing plan possible.
- 6) Outreach workers or LCCEH personally invite individuals living unsheltered who, due to personal reasons, are unable to accept housing at this time to

² This is the largest emergency shelter in the CoC.

meet one on one with LCCEH staff to discuss “what it will take” for them to accept housing. Meeting locations are determined by client choice and a \$10 food gift card is provided as an incentive to meet with LCCEH staff, share their story and concerns and talk about housing options.