

## Memorandum of Understanding – Emergency Housing Vouchers

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created and approved on June 21, 2021 by the following entities:

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz  
2160 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue Capitola CA 95010

County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Department  
Housing for Health Division  
1000 Emeline Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### I. Introduction and Goals

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz (PHA) and the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) collaborate on a broad range of housing and supportive services partnership programs to help households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness within Santa Cruz County. In November 2020, the County and its Human Services Department established a Housing for Health Division to coordinate countywide efforts to address homelessness including staffing of the local Continuum of Care (CoC) and operations of a coordinated entry system. The Housing Authority and Housing for Health Division, on behalf of the CoC, enter into this MOU to effectively utilize and administer Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) in accordance with all program requirements outlined in HUD Notice PIH 2021-15 (HA) and additional guidance as it becomes available.

The goal of this partnership is to utilize all 263 initial EHV's awarded and any additional EHV's awarded by HUD prior to their expiration on September 30, 2023. Further, both parties share the goal of ensuring all vouchers are issued within 12 months of the execution of this MOU. The PHA and HSD, along with other community partners, will measure progress towards these goals by monitoring the vouchers issued and the number of vouchers utilized at least monthly.

The lead contact persons or liaisons at the PHA and CoC for this agreement are identified below. The liaisons will maintain responsibility for overall oversight of the EHV program and coordination with appropriate staff members within the PHA and CoC network to assure effective implementation of the collaborative effort.

Jenny Panetta, Executive Director  
Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz  
2160 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue Capitola CA 95010  
(831) 454-9455 Ext. 231  
[jennyp@hacosantacruz.org](mailto:jennyp@hacosantacruz.org)

Robert Ratner  
County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Department  
Housing for Health Division Director  
1000 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz, CA  
(510) 454-4925  
[Robert.ratner@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:Robert.ratner@santacruzcounty.us)

## II. Define Population Eligible for EHV Assistance to be referred by CoC

The following populations are eligible for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program, as defined by HUD in PIH 2021-15.

- Individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness
- Individuals and families who are at risk of experiencing homelessness
- Individuals and families who are feeling, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Individuals and families who were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of instability

Eligible households previously referred to the Housing Authority under existing referral mechanisms will be given priority consideration for EHV assistance. Additional referrals may be made based on CoC pandemic approved parameters to prioritize access for currently homeless households with a documented higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease based on their age and chronic health conditions. Among this group, preference may be given to households residing in COVID-19 emergency shelter programs. The County and CoC will work to pair eligible households with appropriate supportive services to help with securing and maintaining housing.

## III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV households

1. Partnering service providers will support individuals and families in completing applications and obtaining necessary supporting documentation to support referrals and applications for assistance, while aiding households in addressing barriers.
2. Partnering service providers will support PHAs in ensuring appointment notifications to eligible individuals and families and will assist eligible households in getting to meetings with the PHA.
3. Partnering service providers will provide housing search assistance for eligible individuals and families.
4. Partnering service providers will work to ensure individuals and families secure the supports necessary for them to successfully maintain their housing.

## IV. PHA Roles and Responsibilities

1. Coordinate and consult with the CoC in developing the services and assistance to be offered under the EHV services fee.
2. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the CoC Coordinated Entry System (Smart Path). Nothing in this MOU precludes the PHA from entering into additional MOUs with other partner agencies for EHV referrals, including agencies providing services to victims of domestic violence or human trafficking. Any referrals received from other partner agencies will be coordinated with Smart Path.
3. Commit the staff and necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and

voucher issuance processes are completed in a timely manner.

4. Commit the staff and resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
5. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
6. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

#### V. CoC Roles and Responsibilities

1. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with the PHA.
2. Refer eligible individuals and families to PHA using the community's coordinated entry system (Smart Path). Additionally, any referrals of an EHV eligible applicant from the following voucher programs may be considered an EHV referral, if EHV vouchers are available: Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMV), Homeless Families with Minor Children (HFMC) and Mainstream Vouchers (MS). Such referrals may be considered for EHV vouchers even if the referral was received, and eligibility was determined, prior to the execution of this MOU as long as the applicant remains eligible for the EHV program and as long as the initial lease up occurs on or after July 1 2021.
3. Support eligible individuals and households in completing and applying for supportive documentation to accompany admissions application to the PHA (i.e. self-certifications, birth certificate, social security card, etc.).
4. Coordinate service provider support to attend EHV participant briefings when needed.
5. Assess all households referred for EHV for mainstream benefits and supportive services available to support eligible individuals and families through their transition.
6. Identify and provide supportive services to EHV participants. EHV participants are not required to participate in services but the CoC will work to assure that services are available and accessible for a given participant to the greatest extent possible given available resources.
7. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

#### VI. Third Party Entity Participation

1. Community-based organizations and government agencies currently participating in other pre-existing homeless targeted voucher programs may participate in providing services to EHV program participants in a manner consistent with the terms of this MOU. Additional third party entities may be considered on a case by case basis. Such entities must be approved by HSD.

#### VII. Program Evaluation

The PHA, and CoC or designated CoC recipient agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data

to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

VIII. Term of the Agreement

This agreement is effective immediately upon execution, and will extend throughout the term of the EHV Program, unless subsequently amended in writing with the approval of both parties. This agreement will expire on the date that HUD suspends EHV voucher issuance, which is currently scheduled for September 20, 2023

Signed by:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenny Panetta  
Executive Director, PHA

6/21/2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Ratner  
Housing for Health Division Director, CoC Lead Agency

6/22/2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date