

Rapid Re-Housing

CORE STANDARD

Rapid Re-Housing provides temporary housing and support services through a Victim Service Programs (VSP), a Rapid Re-Housing Agency, or a partnership of both. These services are allowable for any victim of violent crime, when necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim, and needed as a result of a victimization. They enable these victims to locate and secure permanent housing, and provide assistance in securing employment for eventual reintegration into the community.

Rapid Re-Housing Models:

Rapid Re-housing may be provided in scattered site or project-based locations.

Scattered Site -

- Survivor lives in an apartment in the community.
- VSP is not the landlord (unless subleasing to survivor).

Project-based Site -

- VSP can be landlord and service provider
- Survivor lives in the program-owned building or one of the program's rented units for a specific period of time while they find more permanent housing. Survivor has a lease and all rights and responsibilities of a tenant.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

For the VSP that provides rapid re-housing services, the following requirements apply:

1. Compliance - The VSP must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the housing will not lead to repeat victimization and comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws; health and safety codes; and inspection requirements.
2. Policies and Procedures – All VSP policies and procedures must comply with Division of Community Affairs policies and procedures, including policies regarding Fair Market Rent, payment standards, unit inspections and tenant portion. Written policies and procedures for the following items at a minimum must be in place:
 - a. A detailed description of whom is eligible for rapid re-housing services, including provisions for caretakers and/or dependents where appropriate.
 - b. Scope of services that includes relevant support services to assist with the transition (e.g., budgeting, counseling, facility rules and regulations, fee schedule, if applicable).
 - c. A detailed application, intake, and risk assessment process for new clients.
 - d. Communication procedures between the client, VSP, and landlord, including confidentiality considerations.

- e. Rapid Re-housing Rent Structure and Agreement. These may include the following types:
 - i. **Subsidized**
Survivor enters into a lease. VSP provides a portion of rent, as rental assistance, paid directly to the landlord.
 - ii. **Master Leasing**
Lease is in VSP's name and the VSP is responsible for payment of the rent. VSP creates sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor, and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the VSP.
 - iii. **Project-based**
VSP-owned and operated. VSP creates a sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor, and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the program.
- f. Security and liability considerations, which include a detailed Safety Plan, if necessary.
- g. Resident rights and responsibilities;
- h. Grievance procedures;
- i. Emergency protocols (e.g., fire, suicide or service recipient fatality, bomb threats, hostage situations, injury or health-related emergencies, etc.) and unforeseen disruptions of service (e.g., shelter infestations, environmental disasters, natural disasters and utility disruption, etc.), if applicable.
- j. Duration of stay. The length of stay is anticipated to be between 6 months and 24 months, but should not exceed 30 months. Policy should be flexible and balances the specific needs and support services to the victim and their family.
- k. Termination Procedures, including early termination by cause as well as steps for moving survivors from transitional housing status to independence in a permanent residence.

The VSP shall develop and document a rapid re-housing plan meeting the needs of the victim and their family and the availability of funds. The VSP shall document, in writing, the victim's agreement with the plan and all related VSP policies and procedures.

- 3. Conflict of Interest – VOCA Rapid Re-housing funding may not be used in payment to any vendor of rapid re-housing goods or services if said vendor has a personal or professional affiliation with any member of the Board or staff of the VOCA subrecipient program.
 - a. Personal or professional affiliation includes:
 - i. A material economic relationship between the vendor and a Board member or staff member.
 - ii. A material economic relationship between the vendor and a Board/staff member's partner parent, sibling, child or member of the immediate household.
 - b. Members of the Board of Directors and staff have an affirmative duty to disclose all personal or professional affiliations with a proposed vendor of rapid re-housing services and the subrecipient must consider all material facts and avoid even the appearance of impropriety and avoid entering contractual relationships with said proposed vendor(s).

ADMINISTRATION

1. Each request for rapid re- housing services shall receive a separate review for consideration and approval. For each victim and their family, the VSP shall document the statement of the victim's exigent need, the intake assessment, the individualized transitional housing plan, and all signed agreements.
2. VSPs must have a written policy and established procedures on the management, approval, and distribution of rapid re- housing funds. In addition, VSPs must maintain a thorough record of all activities related to the administration of rapid re-housing funds that reflects their written policy and procedures. At a minimum, records must include documentation of eligibility, distribution of funds, payee and amounts, dates of transactions, approving authorities and any other information deemed applicable by the VSP's written policy.
3. VSPs administering rapid re-housing services must establish a system of checks and balances and ensure segregation of associated duties. Formal internal controls for the approval and distribution of funds that includes two-person accountability must be outlined in their written policies and procedures governing rapid re-housing.
4. Awards for rapid re-housing services shall be paid directly toward the financial obligation on behalf of the victim when at all possible (e.g., rent, utilities, etc.). When direct payment to a vendor is not possible or practical, payment may be made to the client with sufficient justification noted.

MONITORING & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. OAG will monitor VSPs on the administration of rapid re- housing services. OAG staff will review program policies and procedures, financial transactions and all records related to transitional housing of victims and their families.
2. Regular reporting on rapid re- housing expenses will be required as part of the quarterly fiscal reporting processes. VSPs are encouraged to develop or utilize tracking systems to monitor expenses for transitional housing services.

VSPs should be aware that the misuse of funds is strictly prohibited. VSPs identified for the misuse of funds through regular monitoring and audits will be held responsible for full reimbursement of the misappropriated funds.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

- VSPs are encouraged to coordinate with other VSPs and other local area service providers to develop a comprehensive range of housing for victims of all crimes within the county. Ongoing communication with County housing providers regarding the

manner in which the program's rapid re- housing services will be distinguished as a housing option within a service area is strongly recommended.

- VSPs should remain abreast of the latest research by seeking out and incorporating new policies and guidelines to improve service delivery to victim populations. Screening/assessment of all victims, should include a focus on connecting them to additional services;
- As a best practice, it is recommended that survivors are never required to pay more than 30% of their adjusted income in rent regardless of the rent structure selected.

RESOURCES

- National Network to End Domestic Violence (www.nnedv.org)
- OVW Fiscal Year 2016 Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking