



**Department of
Development**

PY 2026 Homeless Crisis Response Program

Application Guidelines

Ohio Department of Development
Community Services Division
Office of Housing Support



Program Year 2026 Homeless Crisis Response Program Application Guidelines

Summary

The Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP) is designed to prevent individuals and families from entering homelessness, provide for emergency shelter operations, and rapidly move persons from homelessness to permanent housing. HCRP consists of two components: 1) Emergency shelter operations; and 2) Housing stability which includes homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, local governments, public housing authorities, and consortia of eligible applicants that are currently funded through the HCRP. Requests for funding must be for project-based emergency shelters, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing activities that meet the housing needs of homeless families and individuals. The grant period will be two years. The Office of Housing Support (OHS) reserves the right to award one-year grants.

Emergency shelters that received a two-year Program Year (PY) 2024 HCRP award and are in good standing are eligible to receive an allocation if a complete application is submitted.

Housing stability awards will be granted on an allocation basis to Ohio Balance of State Homeless Planning Regions and entitlement communities that received a two-year PY 2024 HCRP award that remain in good standing are invited to apply.

Housing stability grantees may enter into a subrecipient agreement with other organizations within the homeless planning region in the provision of homelessness prevention and/or rapid re-housing assistance. However, the grantee will remain responsible for the administration of the grant and oversight of activities undertaken by partner agencies.

Housing stability funds should be allocated throughout the homeless planning region based on the need for rapid re-housing assistance. Service and rental assistance funds should be prioritized based on local homelessness conditions.

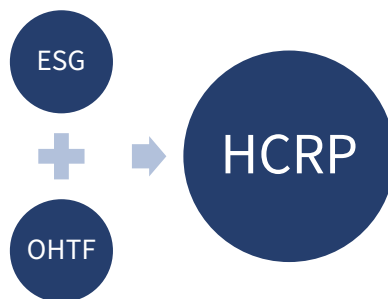
Homelessness prevention funds should prioritize serving persons who are in a doubled-up situation or are being forced to leave and facing imminent homelessness. Any use of homelessness prevention funding outside of doubled-up situations must meet the following conditions: 1) serve households closest to homelessness; 2) prioritize households requesting entry into emergency shelter that have previously experienced a homeless episode; and/or 3) target recipients based upon an analysis of local homeless data related to predictors of homelessness including previous episodes of homelessness, the number of young children in the household, etc. This data should inform the prioritization tool and should identify both risk and protective factors. Grantees must use the at risk of homelessness definition when deeming program participants eligible for HCRP homelessness prevention assistance.

In addition, communities should review local disaggregated data (e.g., by race, household type, gender, and age) to determine any common characteristics of households who enter or return to shelter that could be used to target assistance. This can be accomplished by utilizing Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or other data to analyze typical income levels, homeless histories, ages, etc., of those that present for shelter, and use these factors to “screen in” higher need households. Communities should also use local data to identify the ZIP codes or neighborhoods where clients are most frequently entering the system and target

those areas for prevention. This can help direct resources to those at highest risk, reduce racial disparities, and embed equity into the program design by ensuring that programs meet the needs of those who are often overrepresented in the homeless system. Partnerships with mainstream resources for homelessness prevention dollars are strongly encouraged. Examples of this in practice may include utilizing homelessness prevention rental assistance dollars from Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA2) and supportive services from HCRP for individuals meeting HUD category 2 definition of homelessness.

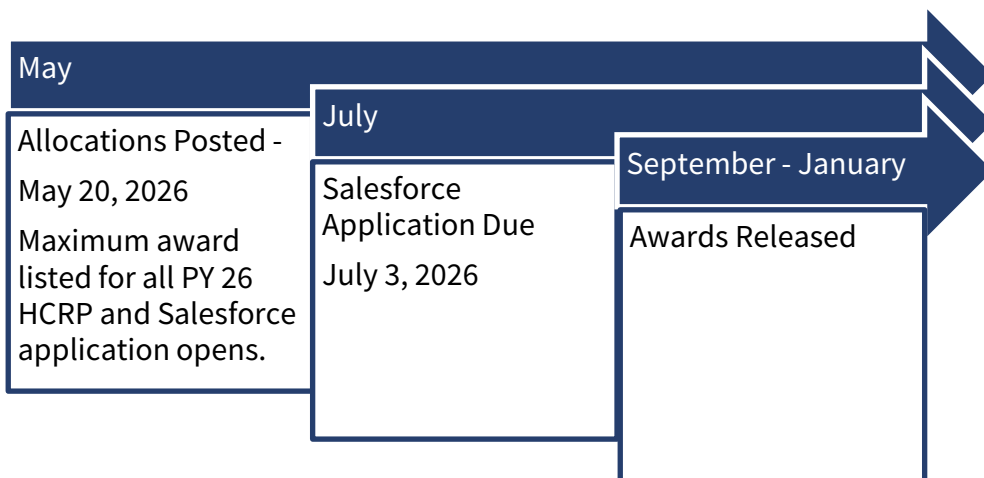
OHS understands that certain Ohio Balance of State Homeless Planning Regions may allocate a larger percentage of funds towards homelessness prevention when there is a lack of emergency shelters to provide rapid re-housing referrals. However, those regions are to ensure that funds are targeted at those most likely to become homeless, such as doubled-up families, and meet the rapid re-housing needs of their region first.

HCRP is funded by two separate funding streams: Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF). Because the OHTF is match for the ESG program, both funding sources are governed by the laws, regulations, and notices posted on the [HUD Exchange](#). Recipients receiving both state and federal funding must spend federal funds first. [Program policies](#) are available on [the technical assistance site](#).



OHS will award HCRP funds on a renewal allocation basis to PY 24 HCRP grantees and reserves the right to issue one-year awards and/or fund organizations less than their given allocations should the application have deficiencies and/or a history of complaints and/or poor performance.

The allocations will be posted and will list the maximum award for all PY26 HCRP grantees. The Salesforce application opens May 20, 2026. The applications are due in Salesforce July 3, 2026. Awards will be released between September 2026 – January 2027.



1. Program Components and Eligible Activities

For this application, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, only the shelter operations activity within emergency shelter, HMIS, essential services, and administration components are eligible for funding.

1. Shelter operations – eligible expenses include staff operating expenses, maintenance, rent, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food, furnishings, supplies necessary for shelter operations, and hotel/motel vouchers.
2. Essential Services – eligible expenses include case management, childcare, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, transportation, and services for special populations.
3. Homelessness prevention – eligible expenses include rental assistance, security deposits, utilities deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, and case management.
4. Rapid re-housing – eligible expenses include rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, and case management.
5. HMIS – eligible expenses include contributing data to the HMIS designated by the Continuum of Care (CoC) for the area.
6. Administrative activities – eligible expenses include general management, oversight and coordination, training on ESG requirements, consolidated plan, environmental review.

For more information on ESG eligible components, refer to the [ESG Program Components Quick Reference document](#).

2. Eligible Populations and Written Intake Procedures

To be eligible for the rapid re-housing component, an individual/family must be category 1, literally homeless, meaning they are residing in a shelter, a hotel or motel paid for by a charitable organization or government agency, or sleeping on the streets. They may also be fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but must also be category 1.

To be eligible for the homelessness prevention component, an individual/family must be category 2, imminent risk of homelessness, and meet the definition of [at risk of homelessness](#) meaning that they have an annual income below 30% Area Median Income (AMI), do not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or other place as defined in category one of the homeless definition. They must also meet at least one of the following conditions:

- (A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for assistance.
- (B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship.
- (C) Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance.
- (D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals.
- (E) Lives in a single room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room.
- (F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care.

HCRP grantees should reference the [HUD Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for Definition of Homelessness](#) for further explanation of homeless definitions and expectations on documenting homelessness. Grantees must follow HUD's [order of priority](#) for documenting homelessness:

1. Third party documentation, including written and source documentation and HMIS records.
2. Intake worker observation.
3. Certification from person seeking assistance.

3. Request Amounts

OHS reserves the right to fund applicants for less than the requested amount.

Housing stability applicants are reminded that the HCRP prioritizes the provision of rapid re-housing to move persons from homelessness to permanent housing, over the provision of homelessness prevention to persons that are already housed. It is preferred that applicants designate no more than 30% of the award to be used for homelessness prevention.

Costs for general administration cannot exceed 5% of the total HCRP grant award (See Definitions).

All HCRP awards are contingent upon availability of funding from federal and state sources.

4. Required Match

Applicants are reminded that they must provide at least one dollar in local public or private resources for every two dollars in HCRP funds for emergency shelter. Grants or loans from the Ohio Department of Development (Development) cannot be used as match. An applicant may use any of the following as match, provided the match is properly documented:

- Cash resources of the applicant organization.
- Cash in the form of a grant or donation from a third party, including private sector, nonprofit sector, and federal, state, and local government sources.
- Rental income.
- In-kind contribution of a leasehold interest in property.
- In-kind donation of volunteer time for program-related activities and professional services at market rate.
- In-kind donation of supportive services provided on-site by other local nonprofit agencies may be valued at a cost verified in writing by the providing agency.
- In-kind contributed materials that are needed for the implementation of the program.

Please note that match is required to be documented. Leverage (which goes into the budget) is all resources available to the project. Leverage should **NOT** be included in the match documentation.

5. Threshold Requirements

- Applicants must participate in the appropriate HMIS and meet minimum data quality standards.

- Proposals for emergency shelter must include documentation verifying the commitments of matching funds which sufficiently meet the match requirements.
- Emergency shelter activities must be targeted at households who meet either category 1, 2, or 4 of HUD's homeless definition (See Definitions).
- Rapid re-housing activities must be targeted at households who meet category 1 of HUD's homeless definition (See Definitions).
- Homelessness prevention activities must be targeted to households who meet either category 2 or 4 of HUD's homeless definition and the At-Risk of Homelessness definition (See Definitions). Priority should be given to households most likely to become homeless, including households who are in a doubled-up situation.
- Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing programs must be targeted at households below 30% of AMI. Income verification and documentation is required at intake for homelessness prevention activities and at 12 month recertification for rapid re-housing.
- Budgets should indicate matching funds which sufficiently meet the match requirements.
- Emergency shelters should prioritize households who are literally homeless.
- Shelter projects must meet the [Ohio Basic Standards for Emergency Shelters](#).
- Emergency shelters are to work toward a maximum length of stay of 90 days or less, with the expectation that households remain in shelter for the minimum time needed to obtain permanent housing. Emphasis is to be placed on decreasing the length of shelter stay to 30 days or less for all households. However, this is intended to be a guideline, not a reason for asking individuals to leave the shelter prior to being able to access permanent housing. In addition, shelter projects are expected to provide essential services designed to move persons to appropriate permanent housing.
- Shelter projects are expected to provide some level of case management services designed to move persons to appropriate permanent housing (See Definitions).
- Shelters that restrict admission to victims of domestic violence are not eligible to apply for HCRP funds.
- Rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention projects are expected to provide some level of supportive services to help persons secure and/or maintain permanent housing (See Definitions).
- For youth shelters, the parent organization must be accredited by a recognized accreditation organization such as Council on Accreditation (COA), Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), or The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) or be licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to provide emergency shelter for youth. Youth shelters must operate in accordance with Basic Center Program Performance Standards as described by the Federal Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA).

- The program will not use HCRP funds for youth placed in the shelter by court order or placed in the shelter by other public agency who have custody of the youth or who otherwise are mandated to assume financial responsibility for the placement of the youth.
- The program may provide emergency shelter care through various means, including but not limited to congregate and non-congregate shelters or host homes as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.
- Congregate shelters serving unaccompanied youth must show evidence of round-the-clock awake supervision to ensure the safety and protection of the youth.
- Youth-serving shelter projects must show a working relationship with the local school system and evidence of their familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act relating to education for homeless youth.
- Applications must be thoroughly completed and include all required attachments. Submission of incomplete application will not be reviewed until all attachments are received.

6. Federal and State Split Instruction for Homeless Crisis Response Program

OHS provides funding to HCRP grantees using a combination of ESG funds and OHTF. Because these two funding sources operate on different grant cycles, several HCRP grantees will receive both an ESG and OHTF allocation. The amount of ESG and OHTF allocated for each program is listed in the 2026 Allocation Table. Agencies receiving both an ESG and OHTF allocation will need to complete an application for each funding source in Salesforce.

The ESG grant work period is to be determined and the OHTF grant work period will be 24 months (1/1/2027 - 12/31/2028) to reflect the different ESG and OHTF program cycles. Therefore, grantees should expend their ESG grants funds prior to expending their OHTF grant funds. Agencies receiving both ESG and OHTF funding should not create separate HMIS projects for the different funding sources.

Grantees receiving federal funds should attach proof of an active Unique Entity Identifier (formerly DUNS) with the System for Award Management in Salesforce.

7. Application Attachments

The application package consists of the following items:

- Calendar Year 2025 Annual Performance Report or Equivalent
- Board Authorization and Certification of Voluntary Board
- Documentation of Matching Funds
- Unique Entity Identifier (ESG only)
- 501(c)3 Attachment
- HCRP Application Worksheet

8. Submission Instructions

Eligible applicants should fully and concisely complete the HCRP application through Salesforce and upload the required attachments. The application is designed so that applicants complete most narrative portions of the application using Microsoft Excel and upload them as attachments in Salesforce. Applicants must use a 10-point or larger font size to complete the application attachments. The Salesforce portion of the application

includes formulas that automatically calculate and fill in budget totals and totals for program specific charts and tables. Applicants will be responsible for printing out the Salesforce application and attachments for their own records.

Deadline

The PY 2026 Homeless Crisis Response Program application submission deadline is 11:59p.m. EST July 3, 2026.

Definitions

Administrative Costs – Funds may be used for grant fund accounting, preparing reports, obtaining program audits, similar costs related to administering the grant during the grant’s work completion period and staff salaries associated with these administrative costs. Administrative costs also include training for staff who will administer the program or case managers who will serve program participants, if this training is directly related to learning about HCRP. Please note that requests for this line item cannot exceed 5% of the total grant request.

Approved Costs – Eligible costs (see 24 CFR 576.101-109 of the ESG Interim Rule) in the recipient and subrecipient’s budget that have been approved by HUD and are reflected in the grant agreement. A recipient and subrecipient may only expend ESG funds on approved costs.

At Risk of Homelessness – Ohio will utilize category 1 of at risk of homelessness definition for eligibility for Homelessness Prevention funding. This definition states an individual or family who:

1. Has an annual income below 30% AMI.
2. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks), immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in this section; and
3. Meets one of the following conditions:
 - a. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance.
 - b. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship.
 - c. Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance.
 - d. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals.
 - e. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
 - f. Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution).

Balance of State – Made up of 80 counties throughout the state that are not designated entitlement communities as defined below.

Chronically Homeless Individual –

1. An individual with a disability who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless and living in a place not meant for human habitation, a

safe haven, or a shelter continuously for at least one year OR on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the cumulative total of those occasions is at least one year.

2. An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for fewer than 90 days and met all the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or
3. A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all the criteria in paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Congregate Facility – A facility used to provide emergency shelter in which residents share common living space.

Coordinated Entry – A centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

Continuum of Care – A planning process that helps communities plan for and provide a full range of emergency shelter, supportive housing, permanent supportive housing, and supportive service resources to address the various needs of homeless persons.

Data Collection and Evaluation – Activities associated with data collection and reporting completed by using a Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) or comparable client-level database; the purchase of HMIS or equivalent software and/or user licenses; leasing or purchasing needed computer equipment for providers and the central server; staffing costs associated with data collection, entry, and analysis, including training.

Disabling Condition – A diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, HIV/AIDS, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of those conditions.

Diversion – When intervention occurs with clients seeking shelter and alternative housing options are found so that they do not enter homelessness.

Emergency Shelter – Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for homeless persons or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. Persons served by the program must meet either Category 1, 2, or 4 of the Homeless Individual - HCRP funded shelters must meet the conditions and requirements of [Ohio's Basic Standards for Emergency Shelters](#).

Entitlement Communities – References to entitlement communities in this program include Lucas, Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, Mahoning, Franklin, Hamilton, and Montgomery counties.

Financial Assistance (Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing) – Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing funds used to pay housing owners, utility companies, and other third parties for the following costs:

- Rental assistance of up to 24 months of rent.
- Rental housing application fees that are charged by the owner to all applicants.

- Security deposits that are equal to no more than 2 months' rent.
- Rental arrears consisting of a one-time payment for up to 6 months of rent in arrears, including any late fees on those arrears.
- Last month's rent, if necessary, to obtain housing for a program participant, paid to the owner of that housing at the time the owner is paid the security deposit and the first month's rent. This assistance must not exceed one month's rent and must be included in calculating the program participant's total rental assistance, which cannot exceed 24 months during any 3-year period.
- Standard utility deposits required by the utility company.
- Utility payments for up to 24 months of utility payments per program participant, per service, including up to 6 months of utility payments in arrears, per service. The partial payment of a utility bill counts as one month. This assistance may only be provided if the program participant or a member of the same household has an account in his or her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make utility payments. Eligible utility services are gas, electricity, water, and sewage. No program participant shall receive more than 24 months of utility assistance within any 3-year period.
- Moving costs such as truck rental or hiring a moving company. This assistance may include payment of temporary storage fees for up to 3 months, provided that the fees are accrued after the date the program participant begins receiving assistance and before the program participant moves into permanent housing. Payment of temporary storage fees in arrears is not eligible.

General Administration (Emergency Shelter only) – The costs to administer the Emergency Shelter portion of the Homeless Crisis Response Program grant only. Eligible costs include activities necessary to comply with the Homeless Crisis Response Program, such as an independent audit, preparing reports and other necessary forms. These expenses do not include the administrative costs to operate the agency/program.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – A computerized database that allows organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness to collect client information electronically and easily produce required reports.

Homeless Definition – The [homeless definition](#) has 4 categories, but Ohio is only able to use categories 1, 2, and 4.

Literally Homeless (Category 1) – To be classified as “category 1” literally homeless, and therefore eligible for rapid re-housing or shelter, an individual must meet one of the following requirements: an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Sleeping in a place not meant for habitation, including car, park, abandoned building, bus/train station, airport or camping ground.
- An individual or family living in shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements, including congregate shelter, transitional housing and/or hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or government programs.
- Exiting an institution where they resided for 90 days or less and were residing in shelter or place not meant for habitation immediately before entering the institution.

Imminent Risk of Homelessness (Category 2) – Individuals/families who will imminently (within 14 days) lose their primary nighttime residence with no subsequent residence, resources, or support networks. *To

receive homelessness prevention funding, HCRP grantees must also document at risk of homelessness status.

Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence (Category 4):

Any individual or family who:

1. Is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence.
2. Has no other residence.
3. Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Homelessness Planning Regions – The 80 counties of the Balance of State (see above) are divided into 17 planning regions. Homeless program representatives in these regions plan and coordinate local and regional efforts to address homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention – Financial assistance and services designed to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and prevent homeless persons from entering emergency shelter. Households served by the program must meet Category 2 or Category 4 of the Homeless Person definition, or meet the criteria listed in the At Risk of Homelessness definition. Households served under this category must be below 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). See the Financial Assistance definition for eligible types of financial assistance.

Housing First – A homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible without preconditions and barriers to entry – and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed.

Rapid Re-Housing – A flexible array of direct financial assistance and supportive services to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Households served by the program must meet Category 1 or Category 4 of the Homeless Definition. See the Financial Assistance definition for eligible types of financial assistance.

Rental Assistance Agreement – An agreement between the landlord and the agency where the landlord must notify the agency prior to evicting an assisted household from their housing. This is different than a lease and is only valid while assistance is given to the client. It is a protective measure for the client.

Shelter Operations – Costs associated with the physical operation of an emergency shelter, including but not limited to costs of maintenance, rent, equipment, insurance food, furnishings, and supplies. Services designed to successfully move persons from emergency shelter to permanent housing are also considered Operations costs. These services include, but are not limited to, assessment, limited case management/coordination, goal setting, service referrals, budgeting, and permanent housing placement.

Supportive Services (Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing) – Housing search and placement services and housing stability case management services designed to help participants locate, obtain, and retain permanent housing and assist them in overcoming barriers to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

Housing search and placement services may include the following:

1. Assessment of housing barriers, needs, and preferences.
2. Development of an action plan for locating housing.
3. Housing search; outreach to and negotiation with owners.
4. Assistance with submitting rental applications and understanding leases.

5. Assessment of housing for compliance with habitability, lead-based paint, and rent reasonableness requirements.
6. Assistance with obtaining utilities and making moving arrangement.
7. Tenant counseling.

Housing stability case management may include the following:

1. Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system to evaluate individuals and families applying for or receiving homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance.
2. Conducting the initial evaluation, including verifying and documenting eligibility, for individuals and families applying for homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance.
3. Counseling.
4. Developing, securing, and coordinating services and obtaining federal, state, and local benefits.
5. Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress.
6. Providing information and referrals to other providers.
7. Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.
8. Conducting re-evaluations/re-certifications.

Youth Shelter – Any facility with the primary purpose to provide temporary accommodation and essential services for homeless youth ages 10 through 17 that meet the requirements of Ohio’s Basic Standards for Emergency Shelters. Youth shelters must be targeted to the following populations: youth who are homeless, runaways, pushed out of their homes, and/or who have no safe place to sleep; youth for whom emergency shelter is critical for family stabilization; and youth who are not in the custodial care of child welfare, juvenile justice and/or other public agency. Youth shelters should have a maximum length of stay of 90 days and are expected to provide some level of essential services designed to move persons to appropriate permanent housing, including family reunification.

Additional definitions may be found on [HUD’s website](#).