



Interim Alternate Process Policies and Procedures

Description

OneHome recognizes the need to have an alternate process for housing placement to ensure equal and equitable access and prioritization for those individuals whose needs may not be adequately reflected by the standard assessment. The Alternate Process Committee exists to serve this need as well as facilitate transfer requests for individuals who require a transfer between different agencies. This alternate process can be accessed by community advocates of individuals who fall into three categories:

Alternate Process Criteria

1. Persons who are unable to complete the standard assessment due to high-acuity mental health conditions or other inhibiting factors. Note that a signed Release of Information is still required to complete this process.
2. Persons for whom the current prioritization is incongruent with the actual vulnerability of the person surveyed; are there special circumstances or behaviors not captured by the standard assessment that may indicate additional vulnerabilities for this person?
3. Persons actively enrolled in a OneHome housing resource whose needs and/or preferences necessitate transfer and enrollment in an alternate housing program.

Alternate Process Eligibility

1. Referrals may only be completed and submitted by those employed by a Continuum of Care provider, to which the provider has HMIS access.
 - a. Before submitting a referral, the provider should explore all other available housing resources in the community.
2. Referred households must meet HUD's definition of "literally homeless".
<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/category-1/>
3. Referred households must be experiencing literal homelessness in the seven-county Metro Denver region (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson).
4. Referred households must be enrolled in OneHome and the Community Queue unless households are unable/unwilling to complete the necessary forms.
 - a. If the household refuses to have information shared in HMIS, Release of Information to discuss in Alternate Process Committee.
 - b. *Note:* Boulder case conferencing/housing providers require the household to obtain and acquire vital documentation before a household can be referred to a housing resource. AP approval does not bypass Boulder County's requirement for households to have all vital documentation at the time of referral.

- c. If a household is already prioritized on a priority list's Community Queue, they are not eligible for Alternate Process as they already have been selected as prioritized through OneHome's dynamic prioritization.
5. If a household is requesting Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) prioritization, the household must meet HUD's definition of "chronically homeless".
<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/definition-of-chronic-homelessness/>
6. If a household is requesting a transfer from a Rapid Rehousing (RRH) program to a PSH program, the household must meet HUD's definition of "chronically homeless" before the lease-up date into the current RRH program.
Best Practice: It is best practice to start documenting chronic homelessness during the RRH intake process for any households that may require a future transfer to a PSH program.
7. While a RRH to other RRH program transfers can be requested, it is important to remember that CoC and ESG-funded RRH programs can only provide assistance for up to 24 months in a three-year period. If a household has reached the maximum assistance provided, an RRH-to-RRH transfer will not be eligible for the Alternate Process.
8. Referrals must be sent directly to designated coordinators by emailing alternateprocess@mdhi.org with the subject line "OneHome Alt Process Referral." All emails containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be encrypted. Requests will only be considered once all necessary documentation is received and will be presented to the Committee on a first-come, first-serve basis.
9. Please review [OneHome Interim Housing Transfer Policy](#) for more information on Transfer Requests and Procedures.

Meeting

Schedule

The OneHome Alternate Process Committee will meet on the third Thursday of every month from 10:30am-12:00pm to review new and outstanding referrals. The Committee will meet virtually via Microsoft Teams; committee members can change forums if agreed upon by all members.

Membership

The OneHome Alternate Process Committee is comprised of 13 members as follows:

- Two MDHI Coordinated Entry Staff (non-voting)
- One Veteran Services Committee Member
- One Youth Committee Member
- One Family Committee Member
- One Committee Member from the following counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Douglas, Jefferson
- Two Denver County Committee Members

Membership guidelines are to be agreed upon and determined by all committee members. Alternate Process Committee Members must be employed by an agency/organization within the Metro Denver Continuum of Care (CoC) and have HMIS access. Each prospective member will submit an Interest Form and Community Advocate Agreement to Alternate Process email which will be reviewed by OneHome staff. The decision to accept or decline membership will be emailed to the prospect. Each member shall serve a two-year term with an option to serve up to two consecutive terms. After one term, an additional term may be reconsidered by the individual Committee Member and the entire Committee Team. After serving two consecutive years, former members may apply again after a hiatus of at least

one year. Additionally, the OneHome Coordinators will periodically check in with Committee members to ensure willingness of continued participation within the Alternate Process Committee.

Attendance and Absences

If a Committee Member is unable to attend a meeting, they must notify a member of the Coordinated Entry team, via the Alternate Process email, at least one week prior to the meeting they will be unable to attend. In the event a Committee Member knows they will be absent for an extended period, they are requested, but not required, to appoint an appropriate stand-in Committee Member. A total of 3 uncommunicated absences may result in a dismissal of membership.

Alternate Process Procedure

1. Referrals must be sent directly to designated coordinators by emailing alternateprocess@mdhi.org with the subject line "OneHome Alt Process Referral." All emails containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be encrypted.
 - a. The committee will review a maximum of five referrals monthly. Any additional referrals received in a month's timeframe will be considered for the following month.
2. The OneHome Coordinators will review to determine if the referred households are eligible for review by the Alternate Process Committee Members and request additional supporting documentation, as necessary.
3. There are certain situations where the case review will be completed, and a decision made by the OneHome team rather than the Alternate Process Committee. These situations include but are not limited to:
 - a. Transfer requests in which transfer is the result of eligibility related to current housing placement (i.e., aging out of youth-specific program, change in family composition, etc.).
 - b. Transfer requests within the same housing program category, such as from Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) to RRH and from Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to PSH.
 - c. Transfer requests in which household is currently fleeing domestic violence/situations related to VAWA (immediate safety concerns). The CoC follows the federal requirements that individuals and families requesting emergency transfer have priority over all other applicants provided eligibility criteria is met and no other options exist.
4. If the referral is declined by the OneHome Coordinators, they will contact the referring community advocate explaining the reason for the denial.
5. If OneHome Coordinators request additional documentation from the referral, the referring community advocate must send it via an encrypted e-mail to alternateprocess@mdhi.org at least one week prior to the next Alternate Process Committee meeting. Failure to provide adequate documentation within this time frame will result in the case being deferred to next month's meeting, allowing for adequate time for supporting documentation to be acquired.
6. OneHome Coordinators will send Alternate Process Committee members an email of that month's final cases with supporting documents to be reviewed before the monthly meeting.
7. When possible, the referring community advocate should be present during the Alternate Process Committee meeting to answer any clarifying questions the Committee may have after reviewing submitted documentation.
8. OneHome Coordinators will send information regarding submissions to the Community Champions on the Monday before each scheduled monthly meeting.
9. During the monthly Alternate Process Committee Meeting the following will occur:
 - Community advocates will be asked to give a summary of the referral(s) they submitted.

- The committee members will ask the community advocates any clarifying questions, provide comments, etc.
- The community advocates will be asked to leave the meeting so that the Committee Members can discuss and vote on the outcome of each referral.
- OneHome Coordinators will send an email to all the community advocates letting them know the outcome decided upon by the Committee Members.

Supporting Documentation

OneHome Coordinators communicate with the referring advocate to identify additional documentation needed to verify the circumstances outlined in the referral. Documentation must provide evidence of how this household's episode of homelessness is causing the person to be more vulnerable than others in the community facing similar hardships. This should include at least one letter from a licensed professional such as a doctor, psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, or behavioral therapist to verify the household's condition and level of service need. Other supporting documentation can include, but is not limited to, police records, hospital records, or a letter from an agency or case manager that demonstrates the household's vulnerability and unique circumstances. The supporting documentation* may also validate that what the household self-reported during the assessment was inaccurate.

If documentation from a clinician or licensed professional cannot be obtained, a third-party verification letter can be submitted as sufficient documentation so long as it adequately demonstrates the participant would be facing grave risk if continuing to endure homelessness. Case Manager must demonstrate a good faith effort to gather medical documentation before a letter from a third-party service provider is accepted as supporting documentation. "Grave Risk" in this case is defined as having or suffering from, but not limited to, an ailment(s), condition(s), or diagnosis/es that is/are terminal and/or are disproportionately exacerbated by homelessness itself and will not be resolved without housing. Because evaluating Grave Risk is subjective, Community Champions are required to use their knowledge and expertise to the best of their abilities to make equitable and impartial decisions.

*If supporting documentation is longer than 15 pages, a OneHome Coordinator will ask the referring partner to indicate no more than 15 pages for the Alternate Process Committee to review.

Quorum

For the review process to take place, a minimum of three Committee Members must be present. OneHome Coordinators are not and cannot be voting members. If community advocates are present to answer Committee questions, they will be asked to leave the meeting before discussion and official vote. In the event there are not enough Committee Members for Quorum, the committee will reschedule a meeting to vote on referrals within 1-2 weeks of the appointed Alternate Process Committee meeting.

Abstention

Committee Members should refrain from participating in the voting process if they believe a conflict of interest exists. This practice ensures a thorough mitigation of bias and upholds the objectivity of the vote. Conflicts of Interest can include but are not limited to prior interaction with the household (defined as meaningful engagement or services provided within the last 6 months), the household receiving services at the agency the Committee Member(s) works for, and prior or current relationship with the household.

Possible Outcomes

The Committee may ask the referring provider to gather more information before a decision is made. Household's may only be prioritized/matched/transferred to programs in which the household is eligible for through Coordinated Entry. At this time, households may not be matched to Emergency Housing Vouchers.

Voting - Committee member votes will take place at the end of each monthly Committee Meeting. Votes will move forward based on majority vote.

There are many possible outcomes from this process including but not limited to:

- Denial for review from the alternate process.
- Changing a household's prioritization from a RRH to PSH resource.
- Placing a household onto a priority queue for housing resources.
- Referral to the next available resource in which that household is eligible.

Policy and Procedure was Created February 2021

- Updated June 2022: Updated Procedure and included the rotation of OneHome Coordinators
- Updated November 2022: Updated Criteria, Eligibility, Members and Term Limits.
- Updated January 2023: Updated Eligibility
- Updated August 2023: Eligibility, Supporting Documentation, CE Requirement, Voting, Outcomes
- Interim policy created October 2023