



Housing First Program Overview For Participants

As part of the Simcoe County Regional Housing First Program referral process, it is important that any individual or family being referred to the program be provided information related to the nature of the program, expected supports and participation requirements.

In order to refer a client to the Housing First program, the service provider first needs to have enough interaction and rapport with the client to be able to provide meaningful information about their situation and comfortably answer the referral questions.

This *Housing First Program Overview* is intended as a tool for referring agencies to use to provide information to participants considering having a referral made to the program on their behalf.

Explanation of the Housing First Program:

- The goal of the Housing First Program is to support people to secure and maintain an affordable home that they feel safe and comfortable living in
- The Housing First Program is a case management program that may include assistance finding housing and/or a rent subsidy

- Anyone participating in the Housing First Program:
 - Will have a worker available to help with things like housing, budgeting, appointments, relationships, getting connected to services, etc.
 - Is required to meet with their worker on a regular basis
 - Agrees to open their home to their worker for home visit meetings. At first that might mean the participant and worker are meeting quite often, but as the participant settles into their home, the worker will see them less often. The participant can connect with the worker whenever needed
 - Is required to create goals to help them secure and maintain housing. The worker will help the participant to create goals and work toward achieving identified goals
 - Will enter into a lease agreement with the landlord and pay rent on time

- Before a referral to the program can occur the participant:
 - Must agree to answering questions from the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI -SPDAT)
 - Needs to share information through ongoing communication about their housing situation for the By Name List and Housing First Program Referral
 - Give written permission for the initial referral for service to be made

- All information the participant shares is confidential and will only be shared with their consent

Referral Process

Agencies using HIFIS and using the By-Name List:

- Enter clients into HIFIS and add them to the BNL right away, but wait until you have enough background information to know whether you should make a referral to Housing First
- Complete a BNL Update Form, including all details on the last page, and upload to the BNL Sharepoint folder
- Complete a VI-SPDAT and upload the summary page to the BNL Sharepoint folder
- If an individual is working with multiple agencies, service providers may need to coordinate with each other to determine who is the best to make a referral to Housing First and keep the individual's information up-to-date over time

Agencies not using HIFIS and not using the By-Name List:

- If the client is also working with another agency that is using HIFIS and the BNL, that agency should do the Housing First referral with the client
- If the client is not working with any agency using HIFIS and the BNL:
 - Wait until you have had enough interaction with the individual to provide meaningful information about their situation, and until the individual understands the nature of the Housing First program
 - Meet together with the individual and your local Housing Resource Centre. The Housing Resource Centre will facilitate the referral (enter individual into HIFIS, add individual to BNL, and submit HF referral using BNL Update Form and VI-SPDAT)
 - You remain responsible for providing supports to the individual and for providing regular ongoing updates to the Housing Resource Centre. The Housing Resource Centre relies on your information to keep the individual updated and active on the By-Name List (and therefore on the Prioritization List for Housing First)

For all required forms and documentation, see builtforzerosimcoecounty.ca/bnl