



Housing First Program Overview Tool for Service Providers

The *Housing First Program Overview* is intended for **service providers** to share information with those **prior** to completing a referral to the Simcoe County Regional Housing First Program on the client's behalf. When clients have a clear understanding of the nature of the program, its supports, and the participation requirements, it will allow them to make an informed decision.

It is important as a service provider referring an individual or family to the Housing First Program, that you have had enough interaction with the client to develop a rapport, allowing you to provide meaningful information about their situation and answer the referral questions.

Explanation of the Housing First Program:

- The goal of the Housing First Program is provide support to individuals, so they may secure and maintain affordable housing that they feel safe and comfortable living in.
- It is a case management program that may include assistance finding housing and/or a rent subsidy.
- Participation in this program **DOES NOT** guarantee a rent subsidy.

- Anyone participating in the Housing First Program:
 - Will have a case manager available to provide a wide range of supports such as housing, budgeting, appointments, relationships, and connecting to services.
 - Is required to create goals to help them secure and maintain housing. The case manager will support the client in creating goals and progressing to achieve them, however, the client must actively participate.
 - Will meet regularly with their case manager.
 - Is required to have home visits, which could be multiple times a week. In addition to home visits, the case manager and client may also meet in the community.
 - Will enter into a lease agreement with the landlord and pay their rent on time.
 - Will be strongly encouraged to participate in the RentSmart program.

- Before a referral to the program can be completed the client:
 - Must answer the questions on the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI -SPDAT)
 - Needs to have ongoing communication with service providers to keep their information up to date, such as their housing situation and contact information.
 - Provide written or verbal consent for referral.
***All information is confidential and will only be shared with the client's consent**

Housing First Referral Process

Service Providers Using HIFIS

- Add client to HIFIS, if not already, and upload the Common Consent and Common Intake Forms. Do not complete Housing First referral until a rapport has been developed and you have enough background information to decide, based on the criteria above, whether you should refer the client to the Housing First Program.
- Email BNL Data Manager at bnl@communityconnection.ca, with the HIFIS # and that it is a new addition, to add client to BNL. The BNL Data Manager will email confirmation of the addition.
- When ready to refer a client to the Housing First Program, complete the appropriate current version of the VI-SPDAT, if one is not in HIFIS or was completed more than 90 days ago, and the BNL Update Form, ensuring you select “Housing First Referral.”
- Upload the VI-SPDAT and BNL Update Form into HIFIS.
- Email BNL Data Manager at bnl@communityconnection.ca, with the HIFIS # and that it is a HF referral. The BNL Data Manager will email confirmation of the referral.
- If an individual is working with multiple service providers, you may need to coordinate with each other to determine who is the best choice to keep the client’s information up to date.

Non-HIFIS Service Providers

- If the client is working with a service provider that is using HIFIS they should make the Housing First referral on the client’s behalf.
- If the client is not working with a Non-HIFIS service provider:
 - Only refer the client when you have had enough interaction with them to develop a rapport and can provide meaningful information about their situation to make a referral based on the criteria above.
 - Schedule an appointment together or meet during drop-in hours at 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 continue to provide ongoing supports for the individual after the Housing First referral have been made.
 - As the service provider interacting with the client, it is your responsibility to provide the Housing Resource Centre with updates at least ever 30 days. The Housing Resource Centre relies on your information to keep the individual up to date and active on the By-Name List (and therefore the Housing First referral active).

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